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PLASSEY TO BUXTAR : A MILITARY STUDY

**DEDICATED
TO
MY MOTHER**

PLASSEY TO BUXAR
A MILITARY STUDY

D. C. VERMA

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FOREWORD

In this small tract an account has been given of the events which led to the firm establishment of the British in the eastern province of Bengal. The attempt is not a new one. Much has already been written about it in almost all the books on the British Period of Indian History. What is new in the book is its detailed study of the various military campaigns. The author has made it clear in the very title of the book. Almost all other authors, old and new, have confined themselves to the political side of the affair; whereas, the present writer has given greater weight and space to military transactions. The present work thus supplements the old ones, and fills up a gap in our knowledge with regard to the rise of the British Power in India. The material has been taken from first-rate sources—manuscripts and standard works on the subject. Dr. D. C. Verma has placed in the hands of the readers a book which would give them the inside story of all the transactions from the battle of Plassey to the battle of Buxar. I am sure it would attract the attention of the specialist as well as of the general reader.

Lucknow,

(BRIJ KISHORE)

13th August, 1975.

INTRODUCTION

The book is a modest attempt at delineationing of the military history of India covering the period from 1686 to 1764. The study is confined to the wars fought by the British in Bengal. The advent of Europeans with their superior arms and ammunition, the magic of 'drill' and above all the use of infantry against the traditional dependence on cavalry, revolutionised the art of warfare in India. Stunned by the magic of the British ways of warfare, many native rulers tried to imitate them. This raised immensely the value of the European adventurers, who were in great demand and were employed in sizeable numbers in the native courts. These Europeans by and large did not do their best when they were required to fight the Europeans for their Indian employers, with the result that the Indian rulers, who heavily depended on these adventurists, lost the war.

Another point deserves special mention here. Almost every book and contemporary record on the military history written by Europeans rests on the presumption that British soldiers were far better than the Indians as a race. They appeared so certain on the issue that they did not even bother to substantiate it. A close examination of the military actions in Bengal during the period under study, however, reveals that the invincibility of British soldiers was a myth. In almost every war won by the British the brunt of the battle was borne by the Indian soldiers and it were they who were primarily responsible for the defeat of their countrymen. As soldiers they were second to none. The causes of defeat of the Bengal army would seem to lie elsewhere— they being incompetency, treachery and voluptuous tenor of life of the commanders, inferior arms and ammunitions,

negligence of intelligence apparatus, and to a great extent failure to apply the tactics of treachery and deceit, which the British often applied to their great advantage.

The study is based on the original records available in the National Archives of India. Most of these are unpublished and consist of primarily British official and unofficial record. I was keen to find out some native source which might throw light on the events. *Siyar-ul-Mutakharein* is the only work but since it was written in praise of the British and was presented to Warren Hastings by the author, it can hardly be taken as an impartial and reliable account. Being full of flattery and exaggerations, it is no way better than the records of the British Government in India.

I record my deep gratitude to Dr. S. N. Prasad, Director, National Archives, who not only encouraged me in this work, but also suggested the topic and the outline and even guided me in the initial stages of the work. As in the case of my earlier work "History of Bijapur" my *guru* Dr. Brij Kishore, an eminent historian, gave me sustained guidance and was kind enough to supervise the entire work. I am deeply indebted to him for his guidance and help.

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26th January, 1976

FIRST ENGLISH ADVENTURE

The death of Shivaji in 1680 created a vacuum in the politics of the Deccan and Aurangzeb decided to take full advantage of this opportunity. He descended into the Deccan with his powerful army with the three fold purpose of reclaiming his rebellious son Akbar, destroying root and branch the predatory Maratha power and to put an end to the heretical Shia principalities of Bijapur and Golconda. His task was made easy by the unsteady character of Shambhaji. Though brave as a lion and highly educated, he lacked the sagacity and practical ability of his father. Much of his time was wasted in domestic feuds and his prolonged war with the Portuguese.

Prince Akbar left India by sea and the kingdoms of Bijapur and Golconda fell to the blows of the Mughals in rapid succession in 1686 and 1687 respectively. The Maratha king Shambhaji also fell a prisoner to the Mughals in 1688 and it appeared that Aurangzeb had succeeded in bringing the whole of India under the Mughal rule. The boundaries of the Mughal empire attained its zenith at this time. But it was also the beginning of the dis-memberment of the Mughal empire. The whole Maratha nation was up in arms against Aurangzeb and the Marathas not only recovered their lost territory but also made valuable additions to it. Aurangzeb had failed miserably against the Marathas and in the year 1706 retreated to Ahmednagar. The Marathas, however, drew closer round to destroy the retreating Mughal army. The retreat soon became a rout and even the Emperor's own baggage train was taken by the roving Maratha bands. Aurangzeb returned to Ahmednagar war-weary, care-worn and woe-begone. Shortly after, in February, 1707, he died.

After Aurangzeb's death the affairs of the Mughal Empire languished everywhere and the quarrels of his weak

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successors only accelerated the decay that had already set in. The provincial Governors became practically independent without formally repudiating the suzerainty of Delhi or shaking off their allegiance to the Emperor. The first to break away was Chin Kilich Khan, the Nizam of Hyderabad. After 1724, he virtually gave up visiting Delhi and concentrated his energies in extending his territories to the South. Marathas and the Nizam shared the territory lying south of the Narmada river. Gujarat was frequently raided by the Marathas and the Punjab was also in a state of turmoil. After the invasion of Nadir Shah Punjab came under foreign influence. The Jats had established a principality of their own near Agra. In Aonla the Rohillas had established their sway while Bangash nawabs were ruling at Farrukhabad. The nawabs of Awadh and Bengal were both powerful and almost independent. The once powerful Empire of the Mughals was on the brink of dissolution, constantly pillaged as it was by the Marathas, the Afghans and its own recalcitrant chiefs. The present study is mostly confined to the eastern province of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.

BENGAL

Bengal was annexed to the Mughal empire by Akbar. Till the death of Aurangzeb the central authority had maintained its undisturbed and undisputed sway over Bengal, and its Governor was constant in his allegiance to the Emperor. After Aurangzeb, however, the position changed, but Bengal was fortunate in having a succession of able Nawabs at Murshidabad, who followed the traditions laid down by the first of them, Jafar Ali Khan. The last of the able Governors was Ali Vardi Khan who had a long term and, despite repeated invasions by the Marathas, was able to maintain a strong Government.

Geography

Lying between degrees 26.30 and 21.30 of north latitude and extending from the 86th to the 97th degree of longitude, computing from the meridian London, Bengal was the

easternmost province of the Mughal empire. Its area was nearly 21 square degree.

The Ganges entered into the Mughal province of Bengal in the latitude of 25.10 where its current washed the foot of a mountain called Tacriagully and then flew towards south-east until it reached the sea. A hundred miles below Tacriagully it sends off an arm to the south which is called the river of Kasimbazar; and 50 miles lower, another which after flowing about 40 miles to the S.W. unites with the other at a town called Nuddeah. The river formed by the junction of these two streams is sometimes called the little Ganges, but more commonly the river Hughli, which after flowing 120 miles of latitude in a course which does not verge more than one point to the westward of the south, gains the sea in the latitude of 21.30 at the island of Sagore.

The main body of the Ganges, which for distinction is called the great Ganges, continues from the commencement of the river of Kasimbazar, receiving a multitude of streams from the left until it reaches the latitude of 22.45 where its waters are met by those of another river even greater than itself, called the Brahmaputra, which rises on the eastern side of the vast mountains that send forth the Ganges to the West. The conflux of these two mighty rivers is tumultuous, and has formed several large islands between their junction and the open sea, which their waters, through several extensive channels reach about 35 miles lower down, in the latitude of 22.10.

Tacriagully is the termination of a vast range of mountains, which accompanies the course of the Ganges from the West; and about 50 miles west of Tacriagully, another range strikes from them to the south, but in a curve swelling to the Westward, which terminates within sight of the sea, at the Nelligree hills, 30 miles inland from the town of Ballasore, in the latitude of 21.30. Several districts belonging to Bengal lay interpersed within these mountains, but none beyond them; for to the westward they extend several degrees, and were in some places impassable, as far as the province of Berar in the Deccan; to the north they divided Bengal from the southern division of Bihar,

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and to the south, seemed the natural separation of Bengal from Orissa. On the eastern side of the Ganges, the territory of Bengal extended to the north as far as the latitude of 26.30 where it was bounded by the foot of the first range of mountains approaching Tibet. By the acquisition of Purnea, the territory extended 20 miles more to the west than Tacriagully and a line nearly north and south, from the northern mountains to the Ganges, marked the boundary between Purnea and the province of Bihar. From this line the territory of Bengal extended 180 miles to the eastward as far as Rangamathy, a town belonging to the king of Assam, situated in the latitude of 26.10 on the river Brahmaputra. The course of this river from Rangamathy to the sea seemed the natural boundary of Bengal to the east; but considerable districts were acquired on the other side of it; and at the upper part of the sea-coast which bounds the Bay of Bengal to the east the Province of Chittagong was wrested from the kingdom of Aracan.

The sea-coast between the mouths of the river Hughli and the great Ganges extends 180 miles and the whole tract was a dreary unhospitable shore, which sands, and whirlpools render inaccessible from the sea to the ships of burden; and for several miles inward, the land is intersected by numerous channels, which derive from both rivers, and disembogue by many mouth into the sea. The islands formed by these channels were covered with thickets, and occupied by deer and tigers.

The triangle included by the Kasimbazar and Hughli rivers to the west, by the great Ganges to the east, and by the sea-coast of the south as well as a large tract on either hand and to the north of the Delta, was as level as the sandry deserts of Africa, or Arabia; and like some of the countries on the banks of the river of Amazons, nowhere produced a single stone. The soil was a stratum of the richest mould lying on a deep sand, which was interspersed with shells. Such parts of the immense plain as were not watered by the Ganges and its branches, were fertilized by many other streams from the mountains, and for the space of three months, from May to August, when

the sun is mostly in the zenith, heavy rains fall everyday.¹

Arrival of Europeans

The Portuguese were the first to initiate the policy of conquest in India. In 1498, Vasco da Gama discovered the sea-route to India and arrived at the Malabar Coast. The Portuguese activities in Indian Waters may be dated from that year. At first, the Portuguese used to send out fleets to India almost every year to destroy the Muslim shipping. Gradually, this policy changed and the Portuguese attempted to hold the strategic centre commanding the seas and control the trade either at its source or at its destination and preferably at both. By 1505, the Portuguese under Almeida were able to build forts at Cochin and Cannanore and had thus got hold of the trade of the Malabar coast. The Muslim powers of the south were fully aware of the danger and formed a confederacy and defeated the Portuguese fleet off Chaul. But Almeida reacted promptly and shattered the confederacy in a naval battle off Diu. In 1508 on his way to Diu Almeida attacked and occupied the Adilshahi port of Dabhol on 30 Dec. Next morning he burnt the buildings of the town and retired to his ships.

Albuquerque, the successor of Almeida, surprised the Bijapur Governor at Goa, Yakut and the fort of Panjim, which guarded the city of Goa, was also carried by assault. The Portuguese occupied the place on February 17, 1510. In May 1510, Yusuf Adilshah 'surprised the Europeans, retook the fort and put many to death, though some made their escape to the sea in the ship.' But when nearly all men of the garrison at Goa had gone to Bijapur to attend the coronation of Ismail, the Portuguese reappeared before Goa, stormed the harbour and occupied it on 25 November, 1510. Taking advantage of the rebellion of Prince Abdulla of Bijapur, the Portuguese also occupied the districts of Salsette and Bardes on which their possession was confirmed by Ibrahim Adilshah on 22 August,

1. Orme, *A Military Transactions of the British Nations in Indo-stan*, Vol II, pp. 1-4.

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1548.

In Bengal, however, their attempt was a singular failure primarily because Bengal was under the Mughals who were still very powerful to deal with such adventurers. Although the Portuguese had started visiting Bengal since 1530, they were able to settle down at Hughli only in 1575. The same year forts at Tanna were also built. Feeling secure at Hughli, the Portuguese started harassing Indian traders, capturing orphan children of Hindus and Muslims and converting them to Christianity. To crown all this, they intensified their trade in slaves. Their misdeeds were reported to the Mughal Emperor who detached a contingent to drive out the Portuguese from the Mughal territory. The detachment attacked the Portuguese settlement which was defended by 200 Portuguese and 600 slaves. After a stout resistance the Portuguese surrendered in 1633 and were driven out of Mughal territory.

French in Bengal

The first French factory in India was established at Surat in 1668. Immediately after, they established their second factory at Masulipatam. In 1674, Francois Martin laid the foundation of Pondicherry and two or three years after, a French fleet entered Hughli and disembarked a body of settlers at Chandernagar, which was granted to them by Aurangzeb in 1688.

East India Company

The East India Company obtained its charter from Queen Elizabeth on the last day of the year 1600. Captain Hawkins went to Agra and met Jahangir in 1609 and received from him permission to settle at Surat. But the concession was revoked due to Portuguese influence at the Mughal court. Two years later in 1611 an English vessel reached Masulipatam and founded the nucleus of a factory at Petapalle. In 1628 a factory was established at Masulipatam, a second one on the coast further northwards, and in 1640 a third settlement was founded at Madras under the name of Fort St. George. In 1645 the garrison of Fort St. George consisted of a mixed crew of

Englishmen, French and Dutch deserters, Portuguese half-breeds and Negroes, in all about 100 men.

In 1651' Stephens and Bridgemen established a factory at Hughli which was the principal port of Bengal and was about 100 miles from the sea on the river to which it gives its name. The officers of the Government superintended the building and did not allow anything which resembled or could be converted into a station of defence. Soon after Hughli became the chief station of the Bay with agencies at Balasore, Patna, Kasimbazar and Rajmahal. In Bengal, the English were neither permitted to have fortification nor to maintain a military force of any consequence. They were only allowed to have an ensign and 30 soldiers to do honour to the principal agents. The factories in Bengal were alternatively kept/ dependent on the Presidency of Madras where the Company had a fort and garrison and from where military assistance could be rushed when asked for.

But Hughli was not considered a secure point either for commerce or for war. Being hundred miles away from the sea and within easy reach and effective control of the Nawab of Bengal, it was subject to minute surveillance by the local authorities and as such the English had no freedom there. In fact, the 'interference' of the local authorities was so much resented that their Agent began to think in terms of armed resistance as they had been doing in the south.

The policy of the English to resist the authorities in Bengal began from the year 1661 when Jenathan Trevisa, the Agent and Chief in the Bay, seized a native vessel for the recovery of the Company's debts. Mir Jumla reacted to it furiously. He demanded immediate restoration of the vessel and made it quite clear that non-compliance would result in the destruction of the out agencies, seizure of the factory at Hughli and expulsion of the English from Bengal. The warning had a sobering effect. Trevisa turned for advice and assistance to Madras and on direction from there restored the native vessel and also apologised to Mir Jumla. There was, however, no change in the views of the English which were more actively pursued by his

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successors.

On 3rd April, 1661, a new charter empowered the Company to send ships of war, men and arms to their factories for defence, for seizing unlicensed persons, for erecting fortifications, for raising, troops and for making war and peace with non-Christians. The same year brought Bombay by dowry, to the British Crown, and in 1662 Sir Abraham Shipman was sent out with 400 soldiers to take possession and to remain as Governor. These were the first British troops to land in India. They landed on the island of Anjediva. In 1664 they were transferred to Madras, but most of the men including Shipman, died and when at last they landed in Bombay in March 1665, the four hundred had dwindled to one officer and 113 men. Strengthened by the charter, the Court gave orders that the forts should be strengthened and the Portuguese soldiers discharged. But the English Agent in the Bay, Winter, differed from the court and did not discharge the Portuguese soldiers from the service. He advocated the adoption of the policy of the Dutch "whose large capital and naval power gave them their trade and kept the native powers in awe. We needed to convince them that we were as powerful at sea as they were with their armies on shore." The forts would be maintained but they thought "two or three armed cruisers would produce more effect in the minds of the natives than many forts."

The Court of Directors did not approve this policy and in 1665 appointed George Foxcraft to replace him; Winter, however, imprisoned Foxcraft and continued as Agent. The Court overlooked this defiance and sent recruits, ordnance and small arms to strengthen Fort St. George. Orders were also issued to recruit trust-worthy natives in the army.

In 1668, Bombay, together with the whole of its military stores, was made over to the Company for a rent of ten pounds a year, and the Company was also authorised to enlist officers and men for its own service, including men and officers of the King's troops at Bombay and Madras. These men took service with the Company under its own military code and articles of war, and it

formed the first military establishment of the Company in India, founded in Bombay. The men were enlisted for short service for three years only. The Company now improved the fortification of Bombay and by 1674 one hundred cannons were mounted for its defence. Finally, in 1683-84 the garrison was increased from 400 to 600 men, two companies of Rajpoots were embodied as an auxiliary force, and Bombay was made the headquarters of the Company in India.

In 1640, Shahjahan had allowed the English Company to trade custom-free. But in 1680 Aurangzeb cancelled the privilege of custom-free trade and imposed uniform custom of 2 per cent on all the traders and one and a half percent *Jazia* on non-Muslims. The supply of saltpetre to the English was also prohibited, primarily because it formed one of the principal items of export and from it gunpowder was prepared in England which was used against the Muslim powers who were at war with them. This was particularly objectionable to Aurangzeb. The imposition of custom, *Jazia* and prohibition on export of saltpetre were resented by the English and they took it as a challenge. The Court of Directors, under its Chairman Sir Josiah Child, decided "to assume the offensive in war, wherever opportunity should offer". The Court declared that they were "determined to levy war, not only on the Nawab of Bengal, but in the sequel on the Emperor himself."¹

The English Chief at Hughli at this time had a force of thirty or forty natives. To this was added, in 1682, a corporal and twenty European soldiers. Dispute arose between the collector of customs at Hughli and Hedges, the English Agent, on custom duties and Hedges attempted to escape with two barges and a number of small boats which were ready to leave for Dacca. He, escorted by 23 English soldiers and 15 Rajputs and some footmen, started on the 10th of October towards the boats. The collector of customs had already despatched armed parties to seize the boats. In the quarrel that ensued two boats were lost and

1. Philip Anderson, *The English in Western India*, 1854, p. 237.

Hedges had to make good his escape from Hughli by night. Such quarrels with the local officers led Hedges to conclude that "we must protect ourselves ; we must break with the Indian Government ; we must seize some convenient post and fortify it".

The court agreed and decided to establish a fortified station in Bengal to maintain its trade there. But Hughli was not found suitable to be a station of resistance. Chittagong, because of its close proximity with the sea, was strategically most suitable for the purpose. Its capture, therefore, was under the consideration of the Court and its Agent at the Bay. Meantime, further complications arose. The native merchants and dealers under the employment of the factory at Kasimbazar claimed a large sum of money from Charnock, who was appointed First Member of the Council at Kasimbazar in 1658 and subsequently as chief at Hughli, and his colleagues. On the refusal to pay the due amount, a suit was preferred in the court of Law. The judge allowed the claim amounting to Rs. 43,000 against Charnock and his colleagues. On Charnock's failure to pay off the money, report was lodged with the Governor of Bengal, Shayista Khan, who directed Charnock to appear before him at Dacca. Charnock evaded the directive and escaped from Kasimbazar to Hughli in April 1686, hoodwinking a cordon of soldiers, who were deputed to prevent him from leaving. There he learnt that the Court had resolved on war and had despatched a great expeditionary force against the Mughal emperor.

The time of the invasion appears to have been worked out after very careful consideration and close study of the political condition of India. Aurangzeb had come to the Deccan with his vast army and was draining out the resources of the Mughal empire in his campaigns against Bijapur, Golconda and the Marathas. Far once in 1686, all the three powers, combined to save Bijapur from the northern invader. Although Bijapur could not be saved and Golconda was also annexed next year, Aurangzeb was never able to establish his rule in the region effectively. The Marathas were still there and the political confusion was apparent everywhere. The English agents in

India thought that the disintegration of the Mughal empire was bound to come and assumed themselves with plans for collecting a considerable part of the floating wreckage. They informed their bosses in England that India was in the grip of a political chaos and that the Company had a unique opportunity of rising to the position of a political power. Men like Tavernier had believed that 'one hundred of our European soldiers would scarcely have any difficulty in vanquishing 1,000 of these Indian soldiers'.¹

The Court of Directors were able to obtain the services of one of the Marques of Worcester's Companies under the command of Captain Clifton and with the permission of the King 'fitted out the largest armament which had ever been despatched from England to the East. Admiral Nicholson was sent out with 12 ships of war, carrying 200 pieces of cannon and a body of 600 men, to be reinforced by 400 from Madras,' with instructions to commence operations with the seizure of the fortification of Chittagong 'for which purpose 200 additional guns were placed on board.' From Chittagong he was to move to Dacca and to compel the Mughal Viceroy there to cede the town and territory of Chittagong to the Company and to extract other privileges and immunities for the British. Little did they realize that the Mughal empire was still too strong for them.

The expeditionary force allotted to Bengal, however, consisted of six ships with one company of soldiers each. But only three ships reached Bengal. They were the Beaufort, with seventy guns and three hundred seamen, commanded by John Nicholson. The second one, the Nathaniel, with forty guns and hundred and fifty seamen was commanded by John Mason. The third was the Rochester, with sixtyfive guns. To each of these men of war was attached a frigate or light vessel built for speed, armed with twelve guns and manned with twentyseven seamen. In addition, the Company had in the Ganges a number of

1. V. Ball, *Travels in India by Jean-Baptista Tavernier*, Vol. I, p. 391.

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sloops and river crafts. Vessels available at Madras were also directed to proceed to Bengal. Nicholson was appointed Admiral and Mason Vice-Admiral.

The land forces available to Charnock were miscellaneous. These were natives of India¹ (Rajputs), native Christians and English soldiers. "At least three if not four, companies of English soldiers must have in the end reached Bengal". The Court had sent out with the troops Lieutenants, Ensign and lower officers. The commanding officers, however, were the Company's servants in Bengal. Agent Charnock became Colonel, and the second in command in the Bay of Bengal a Lt. Colonel, a third the Major and so on. By the end of 1686, the English troops reached Bengal. Of the ships, Rochester and her frigate, with a company of a hundred and eighty men, were the first to arrive. These soldiers were sent up the river in small vessels. About two hundred soldiers were shortly after brought by the Beaufort and her frigate. Some were quartered in the town (Hughli) and the rest at Chandernagar, three miles lower down the river.²

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1. Rajputs retained their own dress, customs, organisation and officers. Native Christians and Portuguese dressed like Europeans. They had learnt manual exercise and the parade drill of European troops.
 2. Hedges Diary II, 54-58—These English and Portuguese companies were presumably formed after the model of the troops of James II. Each company numbered from one hundred and ten to one hundred and twenty men. The uniform of the soldiers was red, trimmed with blue; their arms were the sword and the firelock gun. Over the left shoulder they wore the bandoleer, a leather belt on which were suspended the bullet bag, the primer and a number of little copper cylinders, each containing one charge. Some of the men, or perhaps all, may have been furnished with the great knife on bayonet, which was then coming into use, and which was attached to a wooden haft and screwed into the muzzle of your gun, so that you could never fire when your bayonet was fixed. The sergeants carried a halberd; the officers a half-pike seven feet long. The men were ranged in four ranks, with an interval of twelve feet between them in open order. The officers took post according to seniority in front of the line; but before the charge was given or received they retired among the men of the first rank, and the interval between the ranks was reduced to three feet.

Although strict secrecy was maintained, these preparation could not escape the notice of the Mughal officers and the Nawab ordered three thousand foot and three hundred horse to guard Hughli. Abdul Gani, the Governor of Hughli, raised a battery of eleven guns to command the English shipping in the "hole" or the harbour. He forbade the English from buying victuals in the market, and prohibited the soldiers from resorting there.

On the 28th October three English soldiers in the market quarrelled with the Governor's body guard. These were beaten, and taken as prisoners to Abdul Gani. The news flew apace through the town that two Englishmen were lying desperately wounded in the highway. "Captain Leslie was ordered to sally out from the factory with a company of soldiers and bring back the bodies, dead or alive". He was actively opposed by the Governors' soldiers who at once fell upon the advancing company. Although the Governor's soldiers lost seven men, killed or wounded, they were able to set ablaze all the hovels which surrounded the English quarters and the factory itself was encircled with a broad band of flame. Simultaneously, the newly raised battery also opened fire on the ships in the "hole".

Immediate orders were sent to the English troops quartered at Chandarnagar to rush to Hughli and Captain Richardson with a detachment was sent out to attack the battery who suffered heavy loss and fell back.

At this critical moment reinforcements from Chandarnagar arrived under Captain Arbuthnot who, with a detachment, "advanced and assaulted the battery, took it and dismounted all the guns. He advanced further and carried the battle beyond the Governors house, burning and driving all before him."

The English river-crafts also opened fire on the town, but could do no harm. By evening, the English were able to capture a ship of the Mughals, "and kept firing and

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1. The Governor himself, it is said, fled in disguise by water, leaving Hughli-panic-stricken. Hedges Diary, II, p. 95.

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battering most part of that night and next day, and making frequent sallies on shore, burning and plundering all they met with".

The skirmish was over. The English claimed that their losses were trifling, one man was killed and a good many wounded in the first attempt on the battery. The Mughal, according to Hedges, "lost about sixty men killed, including three men of note, and a great number of wounded. Four or five hundred of their houses had been burnt down together with a great number of barges, lighters and boats".¹ Through the intervention of the Dutch negotiations for peace began. Although the English agreed to the cessation of hostilities proposed by the Governor, they seized a ship of the Nawab at the mouth of the river and deputed Nicholson down with orders to seize three more in the Balasore road. During the truce the English shipped all the Company's effect and seized some of the chief citizens of Hughli for ransom. After this they withdrew to their outstations in Bengal.

Shayista Khan, the Nawab of Bengal, immediately after hearing of the skirmish at Hughli sent orders to seize all the Company's property at Patna and imprison their servants. A large detachment of horse was despatched to Hughli which surrounded the factory. But Charnock was able to withdraw from Hughli on 20th (about two months after the skirmish) to village Chuttanuttee which, with the adjoining villages of Kalchata and Gobindpur was later to became the site of Calcutta. He entered into negotiations with Shayista Khan, who paid no heed to it, and issued order to the subordidate Governors throughout the province to drive the English out of Bengal. But before his orders could be carried out, the English arrived and occupied the forts of Tanna, on Garden the Reach, on 11th February, 1687, "with the loss only of one man's leg and some wounded." The fort was, however, considered untenable and as such demolished. Captain Nicholson, meanwhile, was deputed with half the fleet and forces to reduce

1. *Hedges Diary*, II, p. 55.

the island of Hijili.¹

Malik Qasim, the Mughal commandant of the island, deserted the place without striking a blow leaving behind it fort, batteries, guns, ammunitions etc. By the 27th February Charnock occupied the town and collected the bulk of his forces. Four hundred and twenty soldiers, the Beaufort with her frigate and nearly all the Company's sloops, except one, which had been left at Hughli Point, to guard the passage of the river and another which remained at Balasore with the Rochester and the Nathaniel. Sloops were stationed all around the island to prevent landing and the long-boats and pinnaces kept cruising all night to prevent the people from crossing over to the mainland with their cattle.

The Mughal soldiers at Balasore were alive to the danger of the English attack and had made 'preparations to meet it. They had drawn their ships in dry docks of mud under the protection of promontory called Point of Sand and the batteries were armed to the teeth with guns taken out of the vessels. But 170 British soldiers and sailors attacked the place during the night and the fort was reduced and the river cleared of Mughal ships. On the following day, the English marched up to the new town, and after a short struggle captured the place and burned and destroyed all that lay before them. For full two days now Balassore was given over to the spoilers. They were also able to capture two Mughal ships with four elephants. Mughal forces were equally active. They surprised an English boat with a crew of 70 men two miles up the country, and took poisoner all except one. Meanwhile, the Rochester, the Nathaniel and the Samuel sailed to join Charnock and instead the sloop Good Hope was sent down to keep watch in the Bay. Charnock had commenced the operation with vigour. He had ransacked Hughli, attacked the Tanna fort, destroyed Balasore, seized Hijili. These achieve-

1. *Ibid.*, 60 to 65. The so-called fort at Hijili was a small house surrounded by a thin wall with two or three armed points. It stood in the midst of a grove trees, and was hemmed in all sides by a thick town of mud houses.

ments, he thought, would cow down the Mughals and the Nawab of Bengal. But the Mughals treated the skirmishes as very minor incidents. Aurangzeb was at this time busy with Golconda and the Marathas.¹ Shayista Khan was almost equally unperturbed. He had ordered adequate forces to advance against Hijili, and was sure that they would reach the place in due course and drive the rash invaders into the sea.

During March and April the tropical heat grew fiercer and the English forces gradually dwindled away. To further aggravate their difficulties, the supplies of provisions ran very short. Nothing was to be had in the island except beef¹ and a little fish and soldiers, both on board the ships and in the island, died in great numbers daily; the number of soldiers sick being never less than a hundred and eighty. The island was closely surrounded by Mughal troops. On the other side of the Rasulpur river, opposite Hijili, Malik Qasim had raised a battery which commanded the river, the landing place and even the fort.

Instead of dying besieged at Hijili, the English preferred to attempt to break the blockade by attacking the Mughal soldiers. In one of the sallies on to the mainland they carried off fifteen thousand maunds of rice; in another they took the battery, split the great guns, and brought away the small ones, with a large quantity of powder and ammunition. But the respite thus gained was short lived. The opponents soon returned in increased number, erected a large and more powerful battery than before, beat the ships from their anchorage, and even flung shot into the fort of Hijili.

By the middle of May, 1687, Abdus Samad, the nawab's general, arrived at Hijili with a force of 12,000 men. He resolved on decisive measures, erected more batteries along the river wherever it was narrowest and opened a furious cannonade upon the shipping. Every shot told. The Eng-

1. He did not hear of the proceedings of the English till the beginning of March and then contented himself with calling for the map and ascertaining where such obscure places as Hijili and Balasore were situated.

lish forces were completely disorganised. To further aggravate the situation, a detachment of seven hundred Mughal cavalry and two hundred gunners, on May 28, crossed the Rāsulpur river at the ferry, three miles above the town, and surprised and took the unfinished battery of four field pieces. Abdus Samad's horsemen advanced further and seized the town. The stables which contained the English horses and four elephants, lately taken, also fell an easy prey to the Mughals. The Mughals had lodged themselves within the trenches, but the English, hurrying together after a desperate fight which lasted all the evening, succeeded in saving the fort.

Two hundred English soldiers had died by now and less than one hundred soldiers, weak with repeated attacks of fever, had remained with Charnock to hold the fort. Of 40 officers, only one Lieutenant and four sergeants had survived and were physically fit. The Beaufort had sprung another great leak, and Nicholson had been compelled to empty her of her guns, ammunition, provisions, and goods. None of the ships was more than half manned and the position of the English was desperate. There was no hope of either holding the fort any longer or keeping open the passage to the landing place.

Half way between the fort and the river was a masonry bulding which Charnock had converted into a battery and had placed on it two guns and a guard. Landing stage was also similarly protected. These steps had enabled Charnock to maintain his connection with his base and through the small craft that had hitherto kept guard round the island, he was able to bring more provisions and troops into the fort. With these men Charnock pushed the Mughal soldiers out of his lines, and could maintain his position for four days against overwhelming odds. On the 1st of June, a most welcome relief arrived in the shape of seventy men fresh from Europe under the command of Captain Denham.

The timely reinforcement saved Charnock. The day after their arrival Denham sallied out of the fort, inflicted some harm on the Mughals and returned having lost one man. This immensely raised the morale of the British and

Charnock repeated the feat. On the 4th June, negotiations for peace began and the English agreed to surrender the fort on the 10th June. The Mughal commander entered the fort on the 10th June. The English were allowed to leave the fort with all their ammunition and artillery and they marched out of the place where they had found shelter for more than three months, with drums beating and colours flying.¹ On leaving Hijili, Charnock went up the river to Ulubaria, where he remained for the next three months; then went up to Sutunutti in September 1687 with all his ships and from there sailed to Madras in September 1688.

Thus ended the first British adventure in Bengal. It began in October, 1686, and by May, 1687, it was thoroughly crushed by the Mughal forces stationed in Bengal. A year after, the English renewed the offensive on the Western coast but the Mughal Admiral, the Siddi attacked Bombay, overwhelmed the English rendezvous in February, 1689, drove the English into their fort and captured the island. John Child, President for the affairs of the East and Governor of Bombay 'discovered that nothing short of abject submission could appease the Emperor. He tried the effect of bribery upon the Imperial officers and endeavouring to atone for his past insolence by submitting to the meanest degradation, he despatched two envoys to court.' The Emperor 'sternly reprimanded the envoys...but consented to an accommodation on condition that all moneys due from them to his subjects should be paid, that recompense should be made for such losses as the Mughals had sustained, and that the hateful Sir John Child should leave India before the expiration of nine months.'

These reverses left such a mortifying effect on the Court of Directors that when after about sixty years the empire was actually knocking at their doors, they were restraining their servants, from attempting to establish an empire in India. Charnock again returned to Sutunutti and reached there on 4 August, 1690, with thirty soldiers.

1. Hedges Diary II, pp. 66-69.

SECOND ENGLISH ADVENTURE

The recent humiliation of the English East India Company at the hands of the Mughals left a lasting impress upon them and for nearly sixty years to come they did not entertain any idea of declaring another war against the Mughals or their officers. But this could not refrain them from attempting to strengthen their defences in Bengal which, they thought, was essential for the protection of their trade in Bengal. Having discovered their limitations in the recent war with the Mughals, their attempt was to strengthen their defence in Bengal secretly and without giving any offence to the authorities. This was found necessary because of the unsettled political condition of the country, the disturbed condition of Bengal, the attacks of the Marathas and rivalry with other European settlements in Bengal.

The first opportunity that enabled the English to carry out their fortification was the rebellion of Raja Shobha Singh of Chtauya against Aurangzeb in 1696-97. The English sought the permission of the Governor to put their factories in a state of defence. The Nawab ordered them, in general terms, to defend themselves, and they taking for granted that what was not positively forbidden amounted to permission, raised walls with bastions round their factories and at Calcutta they built their principal magazines. An English sloop frustrated the attempt of the raja to take the fort of Tanna; and the garrison at Calcutta, about fifty men, defeated a body of troops near the town. The English also prepared a plan for the fortification of their settlements in Bengal, and it was approved by the Court of Directors in 1698. It was, however, 'to be carried out with frugality' and 'so evenly and calmly with the Government there, that they may connive at, if not approve your fortifications...'.

The desired fortifications were ready and on 26 August, 1698, the court while approving these, wrote ! 'We wish you to strengthen it by Degrees as you can without any public offence to the country or the Great men'. The fortified settlement was named Fort William. The subordinate factories at Kasimbazar, Dacca and Balasore were resettled and the garrison at Calcutta was augmented to 300 men. It is in this way that the Calcutta presidency came into existence in 1707.

Subsequently also, the court repeatedly emphasised the need of building strong fortifications. Its instructions were carried out but no permission was obtained from the ruling authorities. Most of the fortifications were erected or strengthened during the period of turmoil and wars when Government authorities could spare no time to pay any heed to them.

Side-by-side with the strengthening of defences and the new fortifications, individual English men were entertaining the idea of establishing an empire in India. In 1744 Col. Milles submitted a memorial to the King of England that they can establish an empire in the East without much difficulty, and thought that India might be conquered by a small body of Europeans. The proposal was, however, turned down by the East India Company. In 1754, Col. Caroline Frederick Scot, the Company's Chief Engineer in India, made a tour of Bengal and came to the conclusion that (1) the fortification of Fort William should be strengthened and that (2) if the English wished, they could conquer Bengal. He prepared a plan for the erection of military works and fortification at Calcutta. But the proposed military works and fortifications, could not be completed and alternatively some minor works for the more immediate defence of the place were taken in hand. He ordered that the ditch which had already gone round half the town, be widened and deepened and carried round the whole town with draw-bridges and redoubts for defence. But the departure of Scot from Bengal and the death of Mr Wells, the engineer, who was to carry out the works during Scots' absence, brought an abrupt stop to the work. Moreover, the Court of Directors directed that the work

was not to be started until the consent of the Nawab obtained or until bribes had ensured 'connivance'.

Subsequently, the instructions of the Court were ignored and the construction was resumed. By 21 February, 1756, the 'Redoubt at Perrins' was nearly complete. This was being done under the supervision of engineer Bartholomew Plaisted and assistant engineer O'Hara. The English had also fortified their factory at Kasimbazar where they had a few guns and fifty men. Alivardi Khan became aware of the additional works the English were carrying out. Similar works were undertaken by the French in Chandernagar. Fearing that the events of Karnatak might be repeated in Bengal, he issued immediate orders to stop the work. He died on April 10, 1756, and was succeeded by his daughters' son, Mirza Muhammed, better known as Siraj-ud-daula.

During the time of Alivardi Khan, Siraj-ud-daula had explicitly expressed his grave concern about the growing strength of the Europeans in Bengal, and, objecting to the abuse of the privilege of the custom-free trade by the English, he had advocated a strong policy against them. But Alivardi Khan reportedly advised patience and followed a cautious policy. Siraj's views did not remain a secret and the English developed an intense dislike for him, and branded him as 'a young man, violent, passionate, of great ambition tinctured with avarice.' To flatter the English, the historian Ghulam Hussain Khan also described Siraj as a wicked man who "making no distinction between vice and virtue, and paying no regard to the nearest relations, carried defilement wherever he went, and, like a man alienated in his mind, he made the houses of men and women of distinction the scenes of his profligacy, without minding either rank or station. In a little time he became as detested as a Pharao, and people on meeting him by chance used to say, 'God save us from him.'"

But the English dislike could not prevent Siraj-ud-daula from occupying the throne of Bengal. Still believing that Siraj would lose the battle of succession, they granted protection to the opponents of the Nawab, the most important of whom was Krishna Das. Siraj-ud-daula was

convinced that the English had intrigued with Ghasita Begum, the adoptive mother of Murad-ud-daula, one of his rivals for the throne; and the protection offered to Krishna Das and his family who carried fifty three lacks of rupees, with him confirmed this suspicion. Krishna Das was the son of Raj Ballabh, who was said to be a lover of Ghasita Begum, and had allegedly escaped with misappropriated state revenues. Siraj-ud-daula demanded that Krishna Das should be delivered up to him, but his messenger was ill-treated and turned out of the English premises.

Meanwhile, the need for further fortification was felt by the English on account of imminent possibility of war with the French. Labourers were consequently employed to repair a line of guns which extended on the brink of the river in front of the western side of the fort. 'Notwithstanding the diligence which had been employed to expel the spies employed by the Nawab in Calcutta, several found means to remain undiscovered ; and..... represented in their letters to the Court that the English were busy in raising strong fortifications. Siraj-ud-daula who was on his way to Purnea to suppress the rebellion of Shaukat Jung, wrote to Drake pointing out that 'he had been informed that the English were building a wall, and digging a large ditch round the town of Calcutta ; and ordering him immediately to desist, and to destroy all the works which had lately been added to the fortifications'.

The English, who wishfully believed that Siraj would go down in the contest for the nawabship, were in no mood to obey him. Even if he emerged victorious in the contest, they thought, they would repel him if he dared to attack Fort William. This accounts for the arrogant behaviour of the English in not surrendering Krishna Das even after Siraj was able to subdue his opponents.

The continued defiance and abuse of *dustaks* by the English, which told heavily upon the revenues of the state, must have convinced Siraj that nothing short of an armed action would bring the English to their senses. Before, however, taking any action against them, he gave the English a few chances to mend their ways. Though he sought the good offices of Khwaja Wajid in bringing about a

settlement with the English, he was quite firm in his letter sent to him on May 28th, written in his own hand: "I swear by the Great God and the Prophets that unless the English consent to fill up their ditch, raze their fortifications and trade upon the same terms they did in the time of Nabob Jaffeir Cawn I will not hear anything in their behalf and will expel them totally out of my country". But Siraj's effort proved fruitless.

Siraj-ud-daula was at this time at Rajmahal and the nearest English settlement was at Kasimbazar. Hoping that a show of force might have some sobering effect on the English he had sent on May 17th a detachment of 3,000 men to invest the fort of Kasimbazar. This number continued to increase and on June 1, 1756, Siraj himself, arrived with the main body of his army. The English, however, knew that the Nawab was making a show of force to bring them round although they also received conflicting reports about his intentions.

The fort of Kasimbazar was not in a position to stand the assault of Siraj-ud-daula, "the bastions were small: the curtains were only three feet thick, and served as the outward wall of a range of Chambers, which, with their terraces, imitated ramparts, and were on all sides overlooked from without by buildings within 100 yards, and there was neither ditch, nor even a pallisade, to interrupt the approach to the very foot of the walls. None of the cannons were above nine pounders, most were honey-combed, many of their carriages decayed, and the ammunition did not exceed 600 charges. The garrison consisted of 22 Europeans, mostly Dutchmen and 20 Topasses".¹

Although Kasimbazar fort was surrounded since May 22nd, hostilities began only on June 4, when all efforts towards arriving at a peaceful settlement failed. On that date, Callet later recorded, "a large train of artillery with repeated orders to attack us unless the Chief went in person to the Nabob, which he complied with as the only method we thought of to prevent the Company being in-

1. Orme: *A History of the Military transactions of the British nation in Indostan*, Vol. II, pp. 56-57.

volved in war and losing all the Company's effects at the subordinates, as our garrison was very weak both in men and ammunition." Watts was made to sign the document that "the presidency of Calcutta should, within fifteen days, level whatever new works they had raised; that they should deliver up all tenants of the government who had taken protection in the settlement; and that if it should be proved that the company's dustucks, or passport for trade, had ever been given to such as were not entitled to them, what the Government had been defrauded of by such practices, should be refunded."¹ The garrison surrendered all its arms and ammunition. Siraj-ud-daula touched 'none of the Company's effects at Kasimbazar except the warlike stores.'

Siraj-ud-daula marched towards Calcutta taking Watts with him. The news of Kasimbazar's surrender reached the English at Calcutta on 7th June. Even now they were not prepared to comply with the orders of the Nawab. Instead they continued their preparation for the defence of Fort William. Madras and Bombay were requested for reinforcements. French and Dutch were approached for assistance by the Nawab as well as by the English. They, however, did not oblige either of them. The regular garrison at Calcutta consisted of 514 men of which 174 were Europeans and not more than ten of these had seen any other than the service of parade. Of the rest, 250 were the inhabitants serving as militia. More native matchlock-men were recruited and their number was augmented to 1500. The army of Siraj, according to M. Le Conte (a French), consisted of 20,000 men, 300 elephants, 500 guns and 2,000 iron cannon balls. He thought that except for the European's artillery and its ammunition, the rest was not very 'dangerous' and that the way they were mounted and supplied was 'pitiable.' According to him the people said that they had only clay bullets. Drake was not expected to have a better estimate of Siraj's army and was sure that he would repel and humiliate the invader and would avenge the disgrace which the English had suffered.

1. *Ibid.*, p. 57.

at Kasimbazar. Out of arrogance he, therefore, rejected the peace offer which came to him after the fall of Kasimbazar.

Meanwhile, preparations for the defence of Fort William continued. On 7th June Drake 'by beat of drum, caused all the inhabitants of Calcutta, fit to bear arms, to be assembled; in order to form a body of militia, which was accordingly done the same evening.' Two companies were enrolled and put under the command of Captain Holwell and Captain William Mackett. On 11th June Governor Drake assembled his forces and divided it into four divisions. The engineers threw up a breastwork seven foot high and six wide, at the salt-petre godowns. Two more were constructed at the Court House and a short distance south of it. Each of these were supplied with two six pounders and two field pieces. All the passes leading to the town were furnished with ditch and breastwork.

Spies had reported that the Nawab's army numbered between 30 to 50 thousand men, 150 elephants and camels, 25 European and 200 Portuguese gunners. Drake was confident that with the forces at his disposal and preparations made by him, he would be able to hold out against the Nawab till about August 10, when he expected further supply of men and ammunition from the coast to arrive. Drake also decided to occupy the fort of Tanna which was five miles below Calcutta, on the opposite shore. It commanded the narrowest part of the Hughli river and had about 50 men with 13 pieces of cannon. Ships Prince George, Dadley, Lively Keich and Neptune Snow were ordered to attack the fort on June 13th. The garrison fled on their approach and Tanna fort was occupied by the English who spiked the guns found there and flung them in the river. But this acquisition proved very shortlived. A detachment of 2000 men, sent from Hughli stormed the fort next day and drove the English to their boats. With their small arms from the parapets and two small field-pieces planted behind bushes, the Nawab's soldiers fired on the vessels. The English tried to dislodge the opponents with their cannon and musketry but without any success. Even the arrival of a reinforcement of 30 soldiers next day

could not improve the situation and the vessels returned to the town.

'Meanwhile the Nawab advanced with such uncommon diligence that many of his troops died of fatigue and many were killed by the sun.' He covered 160 miles in eleven days, although it was the hottest time of the year and his artillery was drawn by elephants and oxen. He reached Calcutta on June 16 and his artillery engaged the ships Fortune and Chance which were defending Perrin's Redoubt. His army had, however, neither reconnoitered nor obtained intelligence and was consequently ignorant about English dispositions and the condition of Maratha ditch which was full of debris and easy to cross at many places. Advancing from the northward they attacked "the part which lay directly before them, where a deep rivulet, without any bank behind it, supplied the place of the Morattoe-ditch; and the redoubt, called Perrings', which was one of the objects of the Nabob's displeasure, stood on a point of land at the mouth of the rivulet; but being only intended to command the river, this work had but one embrasure towards the land. Contiguous to the redoubt stood a bridge, which was the only passage over the rivulet, on the other side of which, within 100 yards, were thickets and groves, through which lay the high road. A ship of 18 guns had been stationed to the north of the redoubt, in order to flank the thickets; the greatest part of the company's buxgeries were assembled here to defend the rivulet; and as the guard of the redoubt was only 20 Europeans, 30 more, with two field-pieces, were sent from the fort to their assistance. Four thousands of the enemy's matchlocks, with four pieces of cannon, took possession of the thickets, and from there in the afternoon until night kept up a constant fire, the cannon against the redoubt the matchlocks everywhere. It was returned by the redoubt and the field-pieces, which were placed in the rear of the bridge and opposite to the road, and the buxgeries wherever they chose. At midnight nothing was moving in the thickets; for every man, after eating his meal, had, as usual betook himself to sleep; which ensign Pischard, who had served on the coast of Coromandel, suspected from their silence, and

crossing the rivulet at midnight with his party, seized and spiked the four pieces of cannon, beat up and drove all the troops out of the thickets, and returned without the loss of a man."¹

The Nawab's army did not renew the attack on the north and was on the look out for some less defended place. It appeared essential to Siraj to get his artillery across the ditch. The timely intelligence received by him that the Maratha ditch did not extend all the way round the town solved his problem and he moved his whole army to eastward of the Company's bounds. Through the undefended passage on this side several parties entered into the city. "A party was sent to drive them away and returned with some prisoners, who reported that the enemy intended the next day to make a general attack upon the out-posts ; on which the party was recalled from Perrings redoubt to the north of the bounds ; and every one passed the night under arms."² The Nawab's army was now poised for an attack on Fort William, which was "situated near the river and nearly half way between the northern and southern extremities of the Company's territory. Its sides to the east and west extended 210 yards ; the southern side 130 and the northern 100 : it had four bastions, each mounting 10 guns ; the curtains were only four feet thick, and, like the factory of Cassimbazar, terraces, which were the roofs of chambers, formed the top of the ramparts ; and windows belonging to these chambers were in several places opened in the curtains ; the gateway on the eastern side projected, and mounted five guns, three in front and one on each flank towards the bastions ; under the western face, and on the brink of the river, was a line of heavy cannon, mounted in embrasures of solid masonry ; and this work was joined to the two western bastions by two slender walls, in each of which was a gate of palisadoes. In the year 1747, warehouses had been built contiguous to the southern curtain, and projecting on the outside, between the two bastions, rendered them useless to one

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 61-62.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 62.

another ; however, the terraces of these warehouses were strong enough to bear the firing of three pounders which were mounted in barbett over a slight parapet.....under these disadvantages the fort was deemed so little capable of defence, that it was resolved to oppose the enemy in the principal streets and avenues.

"Accordingly three batteries, each mounting two eighteen pounders, and two-field-pieces, were erected : one opposite to the eastern gate of the fort, at the distance of 300 yards, in the principal avenue, which continued in a straight line to the eastward as far as the Morattoe-ditch ; this battery adjoined on the left to the gateway of an enclosure, in which, at the distance of a few feet, stood a very spacious house of one floor. A cross-road passed from north to east along the eastern curtain of the fort ; but 200 yards north of it, this road lost sight of the fort, by a short turning towards the river, along the bank of which it continued straight to the north in a street formed by houses on one side, and the walls of inclosures on the other nearest the river ; at the upper end of this street, just beyond the turning, was another battery.

"The third was in the cross road 300 yards to the south of the fort, but the ground between was clear. Breast-works with palisadoes were erected in the smaller inlets at a distance, and trenches dug across the more open grounds. Between the north battery and the eastern, there were only two inlets, both of which led into a spot lying on the eastern side of the crossroad between the church and a house belonging to Mr. Eyre. But the ground immediately to the southeast of the fort was much more open ; and part of this space was occupied by a large inclosure, called The park ; the north side of which skirted the principal avenue leading to the eastern battery, the western side extended 200 yards along the side of the cross road towards the southern battery, and the eastern side skirted one side of a rope-walk about sixty yards broad. Along the other side of this rope-walk stood three English houses, all within effective musket-shot of the eastern battery ; which, being erected at the north-east angle of the park, might, by turning a gun to the south,

scour the whole length of this rope-walk, but could not so well command the entrance into a small lane, which led into the farther end of the rope-walk from the south-east. This pass was of consequence, for the enemy might from hence proceed to the south wall of the park, and then continue along it without interruption to several houses, which extended along the cross-road, almost from the south-west angle of the park to the back side of the southern battery, which stood 100 yards farther on in the cross-road ; about 200 east of this battery, and about the same distance to the south of the lane last mentioned, lay another passage which gave inlet into a large opening, south of the park ; from whence the enemy might with even more facility penetrate to the same houses commanding the southern battery. Both these passes were therefore carefully secured. Immediately in front of the southern battery the road was arched over a deep and miry gully, which continued to the river ; but as this battery was thought less tenable than either of the other two, another was erected 200 yards behind it, across the same road, and within 100 of the fort, about the midway of the western side of the park-wall."¹

The English had already got the report that Siraj would attack on the 18th, and on that morning his men began to infiltrate the city. According to Orme "At eight o'clock one of their divisions advanced to the southern battery, and, taking possession of several houses situated on each side of the road beyond it, fired from their matchlocks and from their wall-pieces, an engine of much greater efficacy, carrying a ball of three ounces ; the two eighteen pouders, which were mounted on the battery, cannonaded the houses, in order to dislodge them, but without effect.

"At break of day, two field pieces with a platoon of Europeans had been detached from eastern battery to a slight barricaded work at some distance in the avenue ; and 40 buxerries under a good officer had likewise been sent to take post in the inclosure of the goal, which lay about 100 yards beyond the battery, on the right hand of the avenue :

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 63-64.

the walls of this inclosure were high, and holes had been struck through to admit the firing of the two field-pieces, in case the enemy should gain their way, and oblige those at the barricade to retreat to the goal. About nine o'clock, a multitude of some thousands, armed with match and firelocks, advanced from the Morat toe-ditch, along the avenue. They were stopped by the quick firing of the two field-pieces, which soon after dispersed them; but they retreated into the thickets on either hand, and secure under that shelter, kept up an incessant, although irregular fire on the barricade; nevertheless, the party there maintained their post two hours, when several being killed, and more wounded, the rest retreated, with the field-pieces, to the goal; at the same time the enemy, instead of advancing along the avenue, proceeded through by-ways, and got possession of the three English houses which stood along the rope-walk, and over looked the back part of the goal, on which they fired, so warmly from the windows and terraces, that in a few minutes they killed six buxeries, and wounded four or five Europeans. On which the rest quitted the enclosure, leaving the field-pieces behind, and returned to the battery at the Major's Court.

"The battery to the north was likewise attacked about nine o'clock, but here the enemy did not find the same advantages as at the other two; for the street was narrow, and the inclosure which skirted it on the side next the river afforded no shelter that was not overlooked by the battery itself; and, on the other side, the only houses which commanded it were contiguous to one another, and did not extend more than sixty yards beyond; and in each of them were posted four or five Europeans. The first fire from the battery dispersed the division which was marching along the street to attack it, and deterred them from appearing again in a body; nevertheless they remained in the cross streets from which two or three at a time frequently used to come out, fire at random, and then retreat. A platoon, with a field-piece, was detached to drive them out of the cross streets; which they easily effected, and then proceeded along the northern street, until they lost sight of the battery; when the enemy,

taking advantage of their error, returned through the cross streets, to cut off their retreat, but yielded again to the field-pieces and the fire of the platoon. Soon after, the whole body of the enemy, which had been appointed to this attack, went away, and joined those who were employed against the eastern battery.

"At noon the attacks in all parts ceased at once, and everything remained quiet until two, when the enemy recommended their fire upon the eastern battery, not only from the three houses in the rope-walk, but also from two others on the left hand of the avenue; from which stations neither the two eighteen pounders on the battery, nor the cannon from the fort, were able to dislodge them. The enemy's fire was so incessant, that only the men necessary to serve the guns were suffered to remain in the battery, whilst the rest took shelter in the major's court-house, from whence the place of those who were either killed or wounded at the guns was occasionally supplied. About four o'clock in the afternoon, a multitude of the enemy forced the palisade at the farther end of the rope-walk, although defended by a sergeant and twenty men; and rushed down the walk with so much impetuosity towards the eastern battery, that the gunners had scarcely time to turn one of the eighteen pounders against them; however, the first discharge of grape-shot checked, and a few more drove them to seek shelter in the cover at hand; but many of them joined those who were in the houses, from which the fire increased so much, that at five o'clock Captain Clayton, the military officer who commanded in the battery, sent Mr. Holwell, who acted as a lieutenant under him, to represent to the Governor the impossibility of maintaining this post any longer, unless it was immediately reinforced with cannon and men, sufficient to drive the enemy out of the houses; but before Mr. Holwell returned, Captain Clayton was preparing to retreat, having already spiked up two 18 pounders and one of the field-pieces; and the whole detachment soon after marched into the fort with the other. They were scarcely arrived before the enemy took possession of the battery, and expressed their joy by excessive shouts.

"The two other batteries had remained unmolested since noon ; but a party had been detached from the southern to defend the palisade to the east of it, which was overlooked by two large houses, one on each-hand, a sergeant and twelve men, belonging to the military, posted themselves in one of the houses ; and a lieutenant with nine of the militia, all of whom were young men in the mercantile service of the Company, took possession of the other ; the fire from both defended the pass until the eastern battery was deserted, when all the ground hence to the two houses being open, numbers of the enemy gathered in the ground on the inside of the palisade, and began to attack the two houses, which animating those who were attacking the palisade on the other side, they at length tore it down, and joined those already within. The sergeant with the twelve military saw their danger before the enemy had made proper dispositions to prevent their escape, and quitting the house in which they had been stationed, proceeded by by-way ; which they knew to the southern battery ; but did not give any notice of their retreat to those of the militia in the other house ; who soon after seeing themselves surrounded, without hopes of succour or relief, came out in a compact body, determined to fight their way to the fort ; but two, whose names were Smith and Wilkinson, separated from the rest and were immediately intercepted : the enemy, however, offered them quarter, which Smith refused, and, it is said, slew five men before he fell ; on which Wilkinson surrendered, and was immediately cut to pieces. The other eight, always presenting and rarely firing, got to the south-west angle of the park, when the guns, as well of the fort, as of the battery which had been raised across the road leading to it, midway of the west side of the park-wall, deterred the enemy from accompanying them any farther. The detachments at all the three batteries ; the two to the south, and that to the north of the fort, were now recalled ; and boats were sent, which soon after brought away Ensign Pischard, and the guard of 20 men, which was remaining at Perrings redoubt to the north.

"The batteries had been so much relied upon as the

best defences of the settlement, that the desertion of them on the very first day they were attacked created general consternation. Of the Lascars, who had been enlisted to serve the cannon, not more than twenty, and of the buxerries not one remained. The Armenian and Portuguese militia were stupefied with fear. However, the English still preserved courage, and small parties were detached to the church, to Mr. Eyre, opposite the angle of the north-east bastion, to Mr. Cruttenden's on the north, and to the governors' house on the south, all which commanded the ramparts. In the meantime the enemy had drilled the three guns which had been spiked and left in the eastern battery, and turned them on the fort; whilst numbers of these troops, sheltering themselves in the trenches which had been dug in the park, and behind the walls of that inclosure, kept a constant fire of small arms on the ramparts.

"Before eight o'clock the party at the governors' house, having been much galled by the enemy from the next house to the south, were recalled; their retreat exposed the range of ware-houses adjoining to the south curtain, which was the weakest part of the fort, because unflanked by any bastion."¹

At two in the morning, a general council of war was held but it brake up without taking any decision.

"The enemy renewed their attacks as soon as the morning appeared, by which time they had mounted three guns near the south-west angle of the park, from whence, as well as from the eastern battery, they now cannonaded the fort, whilst their matchlock men from several houses, and behind the walls of inclosures, fired upon the several houses in which parties were remaining, as well as upon the bastions and ramparts. They had not, however, taken possession of the governors' house to the south; another party, under the command of Ensign Pischard, was sent thither early in the morning. Ever and anon some one of the defenders was killed or wounded; but, although ten times the number of the enemy fell, their loss in so

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 65-69.

great a multitude was scarcely felt, and immediately supplied. Before nine, Ensign Pischard returned to the fort, wounded and was followed by his party; on which the detachments in the church and two other houses were likewise recalled, and the posts they quitted were immediately taken possession of by the enemy."¹

Many of the boats had deserted in the night, the rest were filled with more than they could carry, and several were overset. "Most of those who had crowded into them were drowned, and such as floated with the tide to the shore, were either made prisoners or massacred; for the enemy had taken possession of all the houses and inclosures along the bank of the river, from which stations they shot fire-arrows into the ship and vessels, in hopes of burning them. None of the garrison who had embarked with the English women, previous night, had returned to the shore, and their fright being much increased by the fire-arrows, they, without orders from the governor, removed the ship from her station before the fort of Govindpore, three miles lower down the river; on which all the other vessels weighed their anchors likewise, and followed the ship. Many of the English militia, seeing the vessels under sail quitted the shore. The governor had early in the morning visited the ramparts; and after the retreat of the detachments from the houses, when an alarm was given that the enemy were endeavouring to force their way through the gate of palisadoes in the wall between the southern bastion and the line of the guns, had repaired thither, and ordered two field-pieces to be pointed towards the gate; but found none willing to obey him. Soon after, a man came and whispered to him, that all gun-powder remaining in the magazines was damp and unfit for service. At ten o'clock, he also fled in a boat. However, Mr. Pearkes, the eldest member of the council in the fort, resigned his right of command to Mr. Holwell. The whole number of militia and military now remaining amounted only to 190 men. The new governor, in order to prevent any more desertions, locked the western gate leading to

1. *Ibid.*, p. 69.

the river.

"In the meantime the fort was warmly attacked and bravely defended until the enemy ceased firing at noon : neither did they renew their efforts with much vigour during the rest of the day, or the succeeding night ; but employed themselves in setting fire to all the adjacent houses, excepting those which commanded the ramparts. In this interval the garrison continually threw out signals, flags by day and fires by night, calling the vessels at Govindpur to return to the fort."¹ But all invain.

"The next morning the enemy recommenced their attacks with greater numbers than ever. Mr. Holwell through Omichaund and Monikchaund requested the Nabob to cease hostilities. The attack, however, continued till noon when a large body attempted to escalade the northern curtain, under cover of a strong fire of their small arms from Mr. Cruttenden's house; but after preserving half an hour they were repulsed, and the fire on all the other quarters of the fort ceased as soon as this body retreated. In these few hours 25 of the garrison had been killed or were lying desperately wounded, and 70 more had received slight hurts."²

Holwell having realised that further resistance was fruitless surrendered. He was taken to the Nawab with his hands bound. The Nawab ordered his chains to be removed and assured him that no harm would be done to him. Some of the Englishmen were imprisoned and others permitted to leave Calcutta. These men took shelter at Fulta which virtually became their settlement. Thus ended the second English adventure in Bengal. In both the operations the English had followed defensive strategy and had highly under-estimated the capabilities of their opponents. The Nawab on his part, was fully aware of the European superiority in arms, ammunitions and navy and had planned his operations with great care and ability. It was during this conflict that the much talked about tragedy of the 'Black Hole' is said to have taken place. So much has

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 72.

already been written for and against this episode, that further comments seem unnecessary. The latest contribution is from no less a person than Dr. K. K. Dutta.

The English factory at Dacca had also made preparations to resist the Nawab. But after the fall of Fort William its chief, Richard Becher, decided to surrender on June 28. Siraj-ud-daula imprudently allowed the English to stay on at Fulta. He returned to Murshidabad after appointing Manikchand as Governor of Calcutta, which he renamed as Alinagar. He extracted money from the French and the Dutch, who had not cooperated with him during his operations against the English, and had thus incurred his displeasure.

3

BATTLE OF PLASSEY

Allowing the Englishmen to remain at Fulta was perhaps the greatest blunder of Siraj-ud-daula. Fulta not only became the base of future English operations in Bengal but also enabled them to collect vital intelligence and seduce the officers of the Nawab. Drake and his Council started functioning at Fulta and expeditionary forces sent from Madras landed here. The English themselves were surprised at the imprudence of the Nawab in allowing them to function from Fulta. Scrafton says 'It may appear a matter of wonder why the Soubah permitted us to remain so quietly at Fulta till we were become formidable to him, which I can only account for from his mean opinion of us and had no idea of our attempting to return by force'.

The Council at Fulta maintained strict secrecy about its activities which included collection of intelligence about the Nawab's country, attempts to create rivals to the throne of Bengal and tampering with the loyalty of the Nawab's officers. Individual Englishmen were permitted to move freely in Bengal which enabled Warren Hastings to stay at Kasimbazar, procure intelligence from there and pass it on to Fulta. The English factory at Balram-garhi was functioning as usual and even Holwell visited it in September, 1756. Some Indians, such as Govind Ram Mitra, even reported to the Council at Fulta information regarding the disposition of the native troops. One such report received runs:-

"Padre Bento of the 16th from Chincura advises the Honourable the President that he had remained from the 1st to the 25th ultimo at Calcutta where there were then 1000 or 1500 sepoys, and that they had mounted most of the Honourable Company's cannon on the battery facing the river for which they had made new carriages very bad and unfit for service, that there were few guns mounted on

the bastions and none on the curtain. He is since informed by people he can depend on that there were only 1000 men in garrison at Calcutta, that at Tanna's fort there were 200 men, 11 guns, four 2 pounders, one 24 pounder and 6 more unfit for service with only four Portuguese gunners, that at Bugee-Bugee there were 800 men. About 20 good guns and 50 or 60 Portuguese little better than coolies. That at Hugly there are 500 men of which 40 are in the fort. The rest being quartered on the George a place a little above Bandel. They have there also 10 unserviceable guns and some old Portuguese gunners. He further adds that the sponges for the guns were that day sent up to Muradavad."¹

Fort Saint George did not receive the news of the fall of Kasimbazar and Calcutta till the middle of July. Acting on the information contained in Fort William's letter of 7th June, it decided to send 'a re-inforcement of 200 men under the command of Major Kilpatrick.' Accordingly two hundred Europeans under Major Kilpatrick were promptly shipped off on 21st July and arrived at Fulta on 30th or 31st July. But there was hesitation in sending further reinforcements to Bengal. War with France appeared imminent and it was opined by many of the Council to concentrate on the complete discomfiture of Bussy while there was yet time. But ultimately it was decided to send every ship and man that could be spared to Bengal. After long debate over the selection of a commander, the choice finally fell upon Clive, though he was subordinated to Admiral Watson, who commanded the British squadron then lying at Madras. The force entrusted to him consisted of 528 military, 109 artillerymen, 940 sepoys and 160 lascars. The naval squadron consisted of five of His Majesty's ships—the Kent of sixty-four guns, the Cumberland of seventy guns, the Tyger of sixty guns, the Salisbury of fifty and the Bridgewater of twenty. Twelve field-pieces and sufficient ammunitions were also sent. The fleet sailed from Madras on 16th October and arrived at Fulta on 15th December. The first weapon that Clive applied against the Nawab

1. Select Committee Proceedings, Bengal, 15 Sept. 1756.

was intrigue. Although Manikchand was already won over by the English, Clive deluded him with conciliatory correspondence, while he was 'preparing for an attack on the Baj-Baj fort. Clive got the intelligence that Manikchand who marched towards Calcutta had with him about two thousand horses and eight to ten pieces of cannon and that at Tanna fort not more than 150 men were there. Opposite Tanna fort there were nine guns with about fifty men. At Calcutta, there were few or no men'. Encouraged by the poor state of defence, the fleet consisting of 276 of the Kings troops, 616 of the Company's, 1,048 sepoys and 260 lascars sailed up the river on the 29th and anchored at Mayapur, two miles below the fort of Baj-Baj. Here it was decided that the troops should march against the fort overland. Clive with 500 Europeans and the whole of sepoys were accordingly disembarked, and after a most difficult march through a country full of swamps and continually intersected by deep rivulets, arrived at the place appointed for camp, a large hollow situated between two villages a mile and a half north-east of Baj-Baj. "The men, being greatly fatigued were permitted to leave their arms in the hollow and to lay themselves down wherever they thought best; and with inexcusable neglect not a sentry was posted. It so happened that Manikchand, the officer left by Surajah Dowlah at Calcutta had that very day reached Budge Budge with thirty-five hundred men. Here, on receiving intelligence of Clive's dispositions, he laid his plans to attack him at nightfall. The British troops had not been long asleep when they were awakened by the fire of musketry, and found the enemy upon them. Instantly they rushed to the hollow for their arms, the artillerymen deserting their guns and flying back with the infantry to take shelter. Clive, always cool and collected, called to his men to stand, knowing that the slightest retrograde movement would produce a panic, and detached two platoons from two different points to make a counter attack. The British then recovered themselves, the artillerymen returned to their guns and Clive was able to form his line in order for a general advance. Before the action could become general, a round shot

passing close to Manikchand's turban caused that officer to give a hasty signal for retreat ; and so Clive's army was saved, though, indeed, it was by no fault but his own that it had been endangered. H.M.S. Kent then sailed up and silenced the guns of Budge Budge ; and on the following night a drunken sailor, who chanced to blunder into the fort, made the discovery that it had been abandoned by the enemy."¹

The capture of Tanna fort proved a much more easier task. On Dec. 31 the English soldiers continued their march by land. On the 1st January, 1757, the Kent and Tyger anchored between Tanna fort and a battery opposite. The Nawab's soldiers abandoned the place on the approach of the fleet leaving behind about forty guns, some twenty four pounders, mounted on good carriages. Next morning, the Company's troops were landed and after being joined by the sepoys marched towards Calcutta while the ships engaged the garrison at Fort William. The Nawab's troops deserted both fort and town after being fired upon by the fleet and offered almost no resistance. The fort was occupied, before Clive could reach there, by a detachment under Captain Eyre Coote of the thirty-ninth foot. The booty that fell into the hands of the English included four mortars, 91 guns of different sizes and considerable quantity of ammunitions. It was resolved to continue the march and recapture Hughli before the Nawab could advance from Murshidabad. Accordingly, on 4 January, 170 of the King's troops, a company of grenadiers and 300 sepoys commanded by Major Kilpatrick, were detached for the purpose. They surprised the garrison which comprised of 2000 men. The Nawab's men fled and the English were able to take the town by storm with trifling loss. According to Drake. "The capture and destruction of Hughly was esteemed essential to strike a terror in the Suba's Troops and encourage any malcontents to declare in our favour. The Fort was blown up by Major Kilpatrick and the Town, Gunje, etc. burnt to ashes". Plunder and pillage resorted to by the English caused terror in the hearts of the natives.

1. Fortescue, *History of the British Army*, Vol. II, pp. 418-19.

The continued absence of resistance to the English was the result of the complicity of Manikchand who had been appointed by Siraj as Governor of Calcutta and whose responsibility it was to defend the forts of Baj-Baj, Tanna, Calcutta and Hughli. He was not only guilty of neglecting the defences of these places but his inaction even after the landing of the English near Baj-Baj smells of some conspiracy. As far as the English were concerned, their victories bestow upon them no credit from the military point of view. But these acquisitions immensely increased their morale, prestige and enabled them to re-establish themselves in Bengal. Meanwhile war broke out between France and England. The English feared that the French troops at Chandernagar, who numbered three hundred Europeans with a train of artillery, might join the Nawab. To prevent it, they endeavoured to come to terms with the Nawab. The attempt did not succeed. Siraj-ud-daula collected an army of about forty thousand men, forty guns and fifty elephants and moved steadily upon Calcutta. On the 3rd of February his advanced guard entered Calcutta. Clive, who had taken up a position at the northern end of the town, sent a detachment to drive the enemy out, but it could not accomplish the task. He decided, therefore, to wait for a more favourable moment. The whole of the Nawab's army arrived next day and encamped along the eastern side of the town, beside the entrenchment that bore the name of the Maratha Ditch.

Clive was not prepared to encounter the Nawab's army without reinforcements and made a last effort at negotiations. He deputed Walsh and Srafton to the Nawab for negotiations. They met the Nawab in Omichand's garden and retired to their tents during the night. The negotiations were to be resumed the next day. But they put out their lights as if they had gone to sleep, made their escape in the darkness and joined Clive. The envoy's sent by him for negotiation were, according to Jean Law, "to deceive him completely and to examine the position of his camp". Clive then decided to make an attempt upon Nawab's camp next morning to kill him in a surprise attack. At midnight 600 sailors were landed from the men-of-war,

and with these and five hundred European rank and file, seventy artillerymen with six guns and one howitzer, and eight hundred sepoys, Clive started before dawn for the Nawab's encampment. His advance was made in a long column of three men abreast, with the artillery in rear. At day break they arrived close to the Nawab's camp and were challenged by the Nawab's advance guards who briskly fired upon the English. The fire was returned and although a dense fog came, the column continued to move forward and repulsed an attack of the Nawab's cavalry consisting of 300 horses. The advance continued until a causeway was reached, running at right angles to the line of march which led to the Nawab's quarters within the Maratha ditch. "There the head of the column changed direction to the right, as it had been bidden, but, in the perplexity caused by the fog, found itself under the fire of the British field-guns in the rear, and broke up to seek shelter. This movement misled the rear of the column; and very soon the entire force was in hopeless confusion. The enemy opening fire with their cannon increased the disorder; and Clive had much ado to keep his men together. Finally, when the fog lifted, he found himself surrounded by the enemy's cavalry; and though he succeeded in driving them off he was obliged, owing to the fatigue of his troops, to abandon the attack and return to camp." In the action Clive lost 27 soldiers, 12 sailors and 18 sepoys killed and 70 sailors and 55 sepoys wounded. The losses were heavy in proportion to their small numbers. But this adventure, although blind and uncertain, frightened Siraj who lost about 1300 men and was faced with the repeated demand for peace by his officers. ; The idea of an English force calmly perambulating his camp was utterly distasteful and disquieting to him.

The surprise attack had done not much harm to Siraj ud-daula. As a matter of fact the action was disadvantageous to the English who could achieve so little even after bringing their whole force in operation when they also had the advantage of surprise in their favour. Inspite of this the Nawab was virtually forced by circumstances to conclude a peace on terms dictated by the English.

The invasion and occupation of Delhi by Ahmad Shah Abdali, and the news that he was advancing towards Bengal forced him not only to submit to the extremely hard conditions put forth by the English but made him eager for their friendship. Five days later, on February 9, a treaty was concluded which restored all property taken at Calcutta and revived all other privileges formerly granted to the English. This agreement was later expanded into an offensive and defensive alliance.

The treaty gave time to the English to re-establish themselves more firmly and more effectively; but there was no end to the worries of Siraj-ud-daula. The Nawab of Cuttack was reportedly preparing to attack Bengal with the help of the Marathas while the danger of Abdali's attack was not yet over. On 14 February he requested Clive to send to him 25 artillery soldiers alongwith Watts and even offered to pay the expenses of maintaining 500 Europeans on the condition that the English would assist him against foreign invaders and in putting down internal disturbances. He also made sincere efforts to ensure French friendship by offering them very alluring concessions. These concessions were also intended to neutralise the superior position of the English. The French efforts were directed to obtain the intervention of the Nawab for peace with the English, if possible, or, his support, should a clash eventually come off. The English, on their part, were interested in preventing the Nawab from doing either. Both started intrigues at the Nawab's court in pursuance of their respective aims, and the English were able to buy Nand Kumar in addition to many others to their side.

The English made preparations for an attack on the French settlement at Chandernagar. The Nawab, however, positively forbade them and wrote on Feb. 19 that "If you are determined to besiege the French factories, I shall be necessitated in honour and duty to my King to assist them with my troops¹". The warning had a sobering effect on the English and the proposed attack was postponed for the present. But the idea was never given up

1. Forrest, Life of Lord Clive, p. 230.

and the English auxiliary force was still in Bengal for the purpose. The French who knew about English intentions and were conscious of their weak position, proposed to the English a treaty of neutrality. But Watson proposed an offensive and defensive alliance against the Nawab for which the French were not prepared. Watson continued his preparations for an invasion of Chandernagar.

In early March re-inforcements from Bombay consisting of 400 men arrived. It increased the number of Clive's force to 700 European and 1,600 sepoys. A ship, the Cumberland, also arrived from Madras with about 300 men. The French had only 237 soldiers, 120 sailors, seventy Eurasian, 100 merchants, 167 sepoys and 100 Eurasian artillerymen, in all 794 men. Clive now decided to attack the French, notwithstanding the Nawab's orders positively forbidding the English. On March 13th, Clive asked Renault the French Chief, to surrender which ultimately came about on 23 March after a stiff resistance. All this time the Nawab had been asking the English repeatedly through letters to desist from the attack. Although at this time 10,000 men under Rai Durlabh Ram were at Plassey, 4 to 5 thousand under Manikchand still nearer, and a strong garrison under Nand Kumar at Hughli, these remained mere onlookers. Despite repeated requests from the French, the Nawab did not order his forces to attack the English who were to emerge more formidable for him after the destruction of the French in Bengal. The Nawab's attitude not only betrays utter lack of prudence but also gives the impression that he was constantly in fear of the English. The English were able to defy him with impunity.

The capture of Chandernagar proved of tremendous value to the English. It destroyed French influence in Bengal, brought safety to Calcutta, gave the British undisputed control of the river and removed for ever the possibility of a formidable alliance between the Nawab and the French against them. The booty that fell into their hands enabled them to replace their naval and military stores. In a nut-shell this enabled the English to move towards Plassey and lay the foundation of an empire in India. The English were not satisfied with the suc-

cess they had achieved and were determined to turn the French totally out of Bengal. Balasore was taken from the French without a fight and the Nawab was forced to order Law and his Frenchmen to leave his territory.

These experiments convinced Clive that "the Nabob is a very weak prince and entirely actuated by fear, a respectable force in these parts will always make him cautious how he undertakes anything against us."¹ Watts, the English envoy at Murshidabad, also thought that "Fear is the only means to prevail with him."² Consequently, they kept the whole of the English army in Bengal to enable them to extract concessions after concessions from the Nawab. Side by side, the English were also trying to seduce as many of the Nawab's officers as possible and they remarkably succeeded in their attempts. So much so that they hatched a conspiracy to replace Siraj-ud-daula by Mir Jafar as the Nawab of Bengal. Siraj's followers who felt aggrieved against him, or who saw financial and other gains in the change of Nawabship, became party to this conspiracy. On May 1, the Fort William Select Committee approved the plan to raise a "revolution" in Bengal and replace Siraj-ud-daula by some one else. How the negotiations were carried on, how duplicate treaty was prepared to deceive Omi Chand, how Admiral Watson's signatures were forged are all too well known to be repeated here.

The treaty bound the English to win for Mir Jafar the throne of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Mir Jafar in return undertook to make over to the English all French factories within those provinces, to make slight additions of territory near Calcutta and to give compensation for the damage inflicted by Siraj-ud-daula. The plan could not remain a closely guarded secret and the facts of the conspiracy, began to leak out. The spies of Siraj and the French told the Nawab to clinch the affair by immediate action. Siraj failed to take prompt action on his side. Clive, on the 13th of June, set his force in motion from Chandernagar. It consisted of 650 military, 100 topasser, 150 of the train, 2,100 sepoys with

1. Hill., Vol. II, p. 337.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 330.

ten pieces of cannon (6 pounders) and two hawitzers. On the following day he sent a letter to the Nawab which amounted virtually to a declaration of war. Watts withdrew from Murshidabad that very day. Siraj was already aware of his peril and made serious attempts to win over Mir Jafar to his side. Throwing off all royal state, he visited Mir Jafar in person to entreat humbly for reconciliation. Mir Jafar apparently yielded and swore on the Koran to be faithful. Siraj felt assured of his loyalty and sent back a spirited reply to Clive and ordered the whole of his army to assemble some 12 miles due south of Murshidabad at the village of Plassey. The Nawab's army, according to Clive, consisted of about 15,000 horses, 35,000 foot with about 40 pieces of cannon.

Meanwhile, Clive continued his advance towards Hughli, the Europeans travelling by water in boats, the sepoys marching along the eastern bank. The Governor of Hughli did not oppose him because of the insufficient force with him. Clive reached Khulna on 14th and was joined by Watts and his colleagues. By 17th June, Clive reached Patli on the Kasimbazar river. He halted here and sent forward Major Eyre Coote to secure the fort of Cutwa which had an earthen fortification and was about half a mile in circumference. It commanded the passage of the river and also the road to Murshidabad. The Governor of the fort offered some resistance, but later set fire to the defences and retired together with his garrison. Clive's force arrived at Cutwa next day, i.e. 19th and took shelter in the houses and huts of the town. The resistance offered by the Governor of the fort of Cutwa who was expected, according to the understanding with Mir Jafar, to deliver up the fort without any resistance to the English, disquieted Clive. Clive had received from Mir Jafar letters vaguely repeating that though he had been reconciled to the Nawab, he intended to abide by the treaty with the English. Distrusting so ambiguous a declaration Clive decided to remain at Cutwa awaiting further communication from Mir Jafar. The expected letter arrived from Mir Jafar which somewhat allayed Clive's misgivings, but it did not promise any real assistance in the coming opera-

tions. The maximum Clive could expect from Mir Jafar was neutrality. Simultaneously, a letter from one of Clive's agents gave some reasons for doubting Mir Jafar's sincerity. "Much perplexed Clive summoned a council of war, and put it to the twenty officers therein assembled whether it would be better to cross the river and attack the Nabob at all hazards, or to halt at Cutwa, where supplies were abundant, until the close of the rainy season, and meanwhile to invoke the assistance of the Marathas. He gave his own opinion first in favour of remaining at Cutwa, and was followed by thirteen of the officers, including so bold a soldier as Kilpatrick. Coote and six more, however, gave their votes for immediate action, or return to Calcutta. Clive broke up the council, retired alone into an adjoining grave for an hour, and on his return issued orders to cross the river on the morrow."¹

The English army arrived on the eastern bank of the river at 5 o'clock on 22nd and continued its march to Plassey. Clive and Mir Jafar were continuously exchanging letters, each keeping the other posted with up-to-date developments. English troops continued to proceed on their way. Europeans by water, sepoys by land. But owing to the very heavy rains the progress of the boats against the stream was very slow and it was one o'clock in the morning when they could travel the fifteen miles to the village of Plassey. Here they were surprised to learn that the Nawab's army was within three miles from there. Clive detached 200 Europeans and 300 sepoys with two field pieces to occupy Plassey house and other points around the Plassey Grove. The site of the battle-field has changed so completely that none of the features described by eye-witnesses are found today. In 1757, however "The grove of Plassey extended north and south for a length of above half a mile, with a width of about three hundred yards. The trees were planted in regular rows, and the whole was surrounded by a slight bank and by a ditch

1. Fortescue, J. W., *A History of the British Army*, Vol. II.
p. 423.

beyond it, choked with weeds and brambles. The grove lay at an acute angle to the river, the northern corner being fifty yards and the southern two hundred yards from the bank. A little to the northward of it and on the edge of the river stood a hunting-house of the Nabob, surrounded by a garden and wall. A mile to northward of this house the river makes a huge bend to the southwest in the form of a horse-shoe, containing a peninsula of about a mile in diameter, which shrinks at its neck to a width of some five hundred yards from stream to stream.

"About three hundred yards to south of this peninsula an entrenchment had been thrown up, which ran for above a furlong straight inland and parallel to the grove, and then turned off at an obtuse angle to the north-eastward for about three miles. The whole of the Nabob's army was encamped within this entrenchment and the peninsula, and the angle itself was defended by a redoubt. Some three hundred yards to the east of the redoubt, but outside the entrenchment, stood a hillock covered with trees; half a mile to southward of this hillock lay a small tank, and yet a hundred yards farther south a second and much larger tank, both of them surrounded by a mound of earth.

"At dawn the Nabob's forces began to stream by many outlets from the camp towards the grove, a mighty host of thirty-five thousand foot, eighteen thousand horse, and fifty pieces of artillery. The cannon were for the most part of large calibre and were carried, together with their crews and ammunition, on large stages, which were tugged by forty or fifty yoke of oxen in front and propelled by elephants from behind. Forty or fifty French adventurers under M. St. Frais, who had formerly been of the garrison of Chandernagore, took post with four light field-guns at the larger tank, which was nearest to the grove; while two heavy guns under a native officer were posted to St. Frais's right and between him and the river. In support of these advanced parties were five thousand horse and seven thousand foot under the Nabob's most faithful general, Meer Murdeen. The rest of the hostile army extended itself in a vast curve from the hillock before the entrenchments

to within half a mile of the southern angle of the grove. Thus the British could not advance against the force in their front without exposing themselves to overwhelming attack on their right flank."¹

Despite the size and the favourable position of his army Siraj was disheartened and anxious. His generals were untrustworthy and treacherous. His army was commanded by three conspirators, Rai Durlabh, Yar Lutuf Khan and Mir Jafar.

Clive observed these impressive dispositions of the Nawab's army from the hunting-house, and proceeded to deploy his forces. He ordered his troops out of the grove and formed them in a single line running from the hunting-house and directly facing the French. The European battalion of 700 men occupied the centre of the line and were flanked on both sides by three six-pounder guns, manned by fifty men of the Royal Artillery and as many seaman, and to the right and left of these guns, 2,100 sepoyes were drawn up in two equal divisions. The remaining two field-guns and two howitzers were stationed by Clive about two hundred yards in advance of the hunting house, under the shelter of two brick-kilns. Clive's order of battle was complete.

At eight o'clock the action began. St. Frais and his men, fired on the English line which killed one man and wounded another of the British grenadier company. This was followed by continuous brisk firing by the whole of the Nawab's guns, from the tanks in front along the whole vast sweep of the curving line. The light English guns returned the fire but could not keep up the duel longer and after losing thirty men, ten Europeans and twenty sepoyes, in the first half hour of the cannonade, fell back into the grove. The English withdrawal to the grove encouraged the Nawab's army and its whole line closed nearer upon the grove and renewed the cannonade with redoubled energy. The shelling however, did little damage because the English soldiers had lied down behind the mud bank and had made holes in it for the field pieces

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 424-425.

to fire through. Firing through these holes at close range the English field guns wrought some destruction. The duel of artillery continued until eleven o'clock and the English had no hope of any success. Clive called a council of officers, and pointed out the impossibility of attacking the Nawab's army with any hope of success and decided that it would be best to remain in the grove till nightfall and attack the Nawab's camp at midnight.

After about an hour a heavy storm of rain swept over the plain, drenching both armies to the skin. The English covered their ammunition with tarpaulins but the Nawab's powder was damaged and consequently shelling on English positions began to slacken. This disadvantage, however, had no effect on the Nawab's army. His loyal general Mir Mardan advanced from the tank towards the grove to drive the British out from it. But an accidental shot from the English mortally wounded him and his cavalry thereupon dispersed. The Nawab sent for Mir Jafar and besought earnestly for his help by throwing his turban at the feet of his subject and crying "Jaffier, that turban you must defend." Mir Jafar displayed his willingness and bowed his head and laid his hands upon his breast, swearing to render utmost service. Back to fellow-conspirators, Mir Jafar forthwith despatched a letter to Clive, advising him to push forward at once or at all events to attack the Nawab before next dawn. Siraj-ud-daula perhaps knew the character of Mir Jafar and was not sure of his professions of loyalty. Consequently he turned to another leader for advise. This man, also a conspirator, advised him to withdraw his army within the entrenchment and to retire to the capital, leaving his army and generals to fight the English. Acting on his advice, Siraj-ud-daula mounted a camel and with an escort of two thousand horse marched away to Murshidabad. This explains, why the Nawab's army retired into their lines when the battle was going in their favour.

Unaware of all these developments, Clive had retired to the hunting-house to have a nap. While Nawab's army was retiring Major Kilpatrick marched out of the Plassey grove with his division and took possession of the tank that the

Nawab's army had quitted.¹ Later St. Frais also withdrew from the Hillock, leaving his guns there.

Meanwhile, Mir Jafar's army, which was holding aloof from the rest of the host, approached nearer the grove but still remained significantly apart from the rest of the Nawab's army. The main body of the English army by now planted their artillery on the mound which opened fire on the Nawab's army behind their entrenchments. The Nawab's army, which was left without any commander, was easily dispersed. The *Revolution in Bengal* records: "The firing was barely for four hours and the Nabob would have won the victory if he had only charged the English with the body of troops entrusted to him, but having discovered the meaning of Mir Jafar's manoeuvre, who instead of supporting him, was withdrawing with all his men, he had no further doubt of his treachery. He was terrified and thought only of flight. He sent orders to our Frenchmen to withdraw and hurriedly retreated to Murshidabad."²

This made victory very easy. According to Coote "perceiving the enemy retire on all sides, I was ordered to march into their lines, which I entered without opposition; the remainder of the army were then ordered to march, while we pursued the enemy which we continued till it was dark and halted at Doudpore about six miles from the field of battle."³ At five o'clock the British were in possession of the Nawab's entrenchments and camp, and the battle of Plassey was over in which treason and not arms made the decision.

"From a military standpoint the action has comparatively little interest, since the issue turned really on the good faith or, if the term be preferred, the ill faith of the leading conspirators against Surajah-Dawlah. The British could not advance until the enemy retired; it was a shower of rain that silenced the Nabob's artillery and began the discouragement which led to their retreat; and even then the British commanders needed to be waked out of

1. Hill, Vol. III, p. 404.

2. *Ibid.* Vol. III, p. 241.

3. *Ibid.* Vol., II pp. 55-60.

sleep to follow them.... The whole loss of the British amounted to but seven Europeans and sixteen Sepoys killed, thirteen Europeans and thirty-six Sepoys wounded."¹ The Nawab's army lost only 500 men. According to Clive "Surajah Dowlah had not confidence in his army, nor his army had any confidence in him, and therefore they did not do their duty upon that occasion." Giving an account of the battle Clive wrote:

"This morning at one o'clock we arrived at Plassey Grove and early in the morning the Nabob's whole army appeared in sight and cannonaded us for several hours and about noon returned to a very strong camping sight, late Roy Doulub's upon which we advanced and stormed the Nabob's camp which we have taken with all his cannon and pursued him 6 miles being now at Doudpoor and shall proceed for Muxadavad tomorrow. Meer Jaffeir, Roy Doulub and Suttee Cawn gave us no other assistance than standing neuter. They are with me with a large force. Meer Mud-dun and 500 horse are killed and 3 elephants. Our loss is trifling not above 20 Europeans killed and wounded."²

Mir Jafar was installed as Nawab of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa by Clive and a few days later Siraj was captured and assassinated. On the 29th Clive entered the city and formally installed Mir Jafar on the throne. Warren Hastings, then 25 years of age, was selected to reside at the court as the Company's representative.

Explaining the reasons of this 'revolution' Clive wrote on July 26th to the Secret Committee.

"By the Kings Fisher Sloop of War under the date 16th April, I gave you an account of the taking of Chandernagore, the subject of this address is an event of much higher importance, not less than the entire Overthrow of Nabob Surajah Dolaw, and the placing of Jaffeir Ally Cawn on the Throne. I intimated in my last how dilatory Surajah Dolaw appeared in fulfilling the Articles of the Treaty; this disposition not only contained, but we discovered that he was designing our Ruin by conjunction with the French;

1. Fortescue, Vol. II, p. 424.

2. Select Committee proceedings (Bengal) dated 28-6-1757.

To this end Monsr Busie was pressingly invited to come into the Province, and Monar Laws of Cossimbuzar (who before had been privately entertained in his service) was ordered to return from Patna. About this time some of his principal Officers made Overtures to us for dethroning him, at the [head] of these was Jaffeir Ally Cawn, then Buxey to the Army, a Man as generally esteemed as other was detested. As we had reason to believe the disaffection of patetty general, we soon entered into engagements with the Jaffeir Ally Cawn to put the Crown on his head. All necessary preparations being completed with the utmost Secrecy, the army consisting of about 100 Europeans, and 2000 Sepoys with 8 pieces of Cannon marched from Chandernagore the 13th June, and arrived the 18th at Cutwah Fort, which was taken without Opposition. The 22nd in the evening we crossed the River, and landing on the Island marched straight for Plassey Grove, where we arrived by one in the morning. At day break we discovered the Nabob's army moving towards us, consisting as we since found of about 15000 Horse, and 35,000 Foot, with upwards of 40 pieces of Cannon supported by their whole army, and continued to play on us very briskly for several hours during which our situation was of the utmost service to us being lodged in a large Grove surrounded with good Mud Banks. To succeed in an attempt on their cannon was next to impossible, as they were planted in a Manner round us and at a considerable distance from each other, we therefore remained quiet in our Post, in expectation of a successful Attack upon their camp at night. About noon the enemy drew off their artillery and retired —into their camp, being the same which [Rai] Dulub had left but few days before, and which he had fortified with a good Ditch and Breastwork. We immediately sent a Detachment accompanied with 2 Field Pieces to take posession of a Tank with high Banks, which was advanced about 300 yards beyond our Grove and from whence the enemy had considerably annoyed us with some Cannon managed by Frenchmen. This motion brought them out a second time, but on finding them make no great effort to dislodge us, we proceeded to take possession of one or two

more eminences lying very near an angle of their Camp from whence and an adjacent eminence still in their possession, they kept a smart fire of Musqueter upon us. They made several attempts to bring out their Cannon, but our advanced Field Pieces played so warmly and well upon them that they were always drove back. The Horse exposing themselves a good deal on this occasion, many of them were killed, among the rest four or five Officers of the first Distinction, by which the whole army being dispirited and thrown into some confusion, we were encouraged to storm both the eminences and the Angle of their camp, which were carried at the same instant with little or no loss, though the latter was defended (exclusive of Blacks) by 40 French and 2 Pieces of Cannon, and the former by a large Body of Blacks both Foot and Horse. On this a general Rout ensued, and we pursued the enemy six miles, passing upwards of 40 Pieces of Cannon, they had abandoned with an infinite number of Hackaries and carriages filled with Baggage of all kind. Surajah Dolaw escaped on a Camel, and reaching Muxadavad early the next morning dispatched away what Jewels, and Treasure he conveniently could and he himself followed at Midnight with only two or three attendants.

Its computed there were killed of the enemy about 500. Our loss amounted to only 22 killed, and 50 wounded, and those chiefly Blacks. During the war most part of the action we observed a large Body of troops hovering on our Right, who proved to be our Friends, but as they never discovered themselves by any Signal whatever, we frequently fired on them to make them keep their Distance. When the Battle was over they sent a congratulatory Message, and encamped in our neighbourhood that night. The next morning, Jaffeir Ally Cawn paid me a visit and expressed much gratitude for the service done [to] him, assuring me in the most Solemn Manner that he would faithfully perform his engagements to the English. He then proceeded to the City which he reached some hours before Surajah Dolaw left it.

As immediately on Surajah Dowla flight Jaffeir Ally Cawn found himself in peaceable possession of the palace

and city, I encamped without, to prevent the Inhabitants from being plundered or disturbed, first at Maudepoor and afterwards at the French Factory at Sydabad, however, I sent forward Messrs Watts and Walsh to enquire into the State of the Treasury, and inform me what was transacting at the palace. By their representation I soon found it necessary for me to be present on many accounts. Accordingly the 29th I entered the city with a Guard of 200 Europeans and 300 Sepoys and took up my Quarters in a Spacious House and garden near the Palace. The same evening I waited on Jaffeir Ally Cawn who refused seating himself on the Musnud till placed on it by me which done he received Homage as Nabob from all his courtiers; The next morning he returned my visit, when after a good deal of discourse on the situation of his affairs I recommended to him to consult Jaggut Seat on all occasions, who as a Man of Sense and by far of the greatest property among all his subjects would give him the best advice for settling the Kingdom in peace and Security. On this he proposed that we should immediately set out together to visit him which being compiled with, Solemn engagements were entered into by the three parties for a strict union and mutual support of each others interest. Jaggut Seat then undertook to use his whole interest at Delhi (which is certainly very considerable) to get the Nabob acknowledged by the Mogul and our late grants confirmed likewise procure for us any other Phirmaunds we might have occasion for.

The substance of the Treaty with the present Nabob is viz: .

1st. Confirmation of the Mint and all other Grants and Privileges in the Treaty with the late Nabob.

2nd. An alliance offensive and defensive against all enemies whatever.

3rd. The French factories and effects to be delivered up and they never permitted to resettle in any of the three provinces.

4th. One hundred lack of rupees to be paid to the Company in consideration of their losses at Calcutta and the expenses of the campaign.

5th. Fifty lack of rupees to be given to the English Sufferers at the loss of Calcutta.

6th. Twenty lack to Jentooes, Moor's etc. Black Sufferers at the loss of Calcutta.

7th. Seven lack to the Armenian sufferers. These three last donations to be distributed at the pleasure of the Admiral and the Gentlemen of Council including me.

8th. The entire property of all lands within the Moratae Ditch, which run round Calcutta, to be vested in the Company, also six hundred yards all round without the said ditch.

9th. The Company to have the zemmindarry of the country to the South of Calcutta lying between the Lake and River and reaching as fas as Culpee, they paying the customary rents paid by former Zemindars to the Government.

10th. Whenever the assistance of the English troops shall be wanted, their extraordinary charges to be paid by the Nabob.

11th. No forts to be erected by the Government on the river side from Hugly downwards.

12th. The foregoing Articles to be performed without delay as soon as Jaffeir Ally Cawn becomes Soobah.

On examining the Treasury there were found about 150 lack of Rupees which being too little to answer our demands much less leave a sufficiency for the Nabob's necessary disbursements, it was referred to Jaggutseat as a mutual friend to settle what payment should be made to us, who accordingly determined that we should immediately receive one half of our demand, 2/3rd in money and 1/3rd in Gold and Silver plate; Jewels and Goods, and that the other half should be discharged in three years, at three equal and annual payments.

The part to be paid in ready money is received, and safely arrived at Calcutta, and the goods jewels etc. are now delivering over to us, the major part of these will be bought back by the Nabob for ready Money and on the remaining part there will be little or no loss. A large proportion was proposed to have been paid us in jewels, but as they are not a very saleable article we got the amount reduced one half, and the difference to be made

good in money.

It is impossible as yet to form a judgment how much the granted lands will produce you, as the Europeans are quite ignorant of the extent of the country between the river, and lake, but in order to give you some idea of the value I will venture to estimate it at 10 lack per annum. An officer on the part of the Nabob is already dispatched to Calcutta to begin the Survey in company with one of ours.

Surajah Dolaw was not discovered till some days after his flight, however he was at last taken in the neighbourhood of Rajah Maul and brought to Muxadavad, the 2nd instant late at night. He was immediately cut off by order of the Nabob's son and as it is said without the [father's] knowledge. Next morning the Nabob paid me a visit and thought it necessary to palliate the matter on motives of policy, for that Surajah Dolaw had on the road wrote letters to many of the zemindars of the army and occasioned some commotion among them in his favour.

Monsr. Laws and his party came down as far as Rajah-mual to Surajah Dolaw assistance, and were within 3 hours march of him when he was taken. As soon as they heard of his misfortune they returned by forced marches and by the last advice had passed by Patna on the other side of the river. A party of Europeans and Sepoys were quickly dispatched after them but I am doubtful if we shall be able to overtake them before they get out of the Nabob's dominions. Strong letters have been written from the Nabob to the Naib of Patna to distress them all in his power and take them prisoners if possible, a compliance with which I am in impatient expectation of.

I ought to observe that [torn] in the action were come fugitives from Chandernagore who had assembled at Sydabad. It was by their advices, and indeed by their hand: that the English factory at Cossimbuzar was burnt and destroyed after our gentlemen had quitted it on the renewal of the troubles.

The present Nabob has every appearance of being firmly and durably seated on the throne. The whole country has quietly submitted to him and even the apprehension of an

inroad from the side of Delhi is vanished so that this great revolution, so happily brought about seems complete in every respects. I persuade myself the importance of your possessions now in Bengal will determine you to send out not only a large and early supply of troops and good officers but of capable young gentlemen for the Civil branches of your business."¹

1. *Home Misc. Series of Records*, Vol. 19, pp. 120-128.

MIR JAFAR

Mir Jafar, the new Nawab became a puppet in the hands of Clive who was, and was supposed to be, the virtual ruler. The principal feudatory chiefs paid abeisances to Clive, obtained from him promises for protection and the principal men in the treachery addressed congratulatory letters to him. It was Clive who arranged for the Imperial approval of the appointment of the new Nawab. Warren Hastings was kept as the regent at the court of the Nawab and the greater part of the English army was stationed at Kasimbazar to keep watch over Murshidabad. The resources of Bengal were now at their disposal and Clive exploited these to the maximum advantage. The army increased many fold, arms and ammunitions were provided to it and all offices were filled up with English proteges much against the wishes of Mir Jafar. A letter from Clive and Watts, dated 6th March, 1758, throws light on these points :

"This morning we received a letter from Messrs Clive and Watts dated the 6th instant at Buckypoor acknowledging the receipt of our Letters of the 28th January and 21st February and acquainting us that after great solicitations and trouble the Nabob has been prevailed upon to make Ramnarain the Nabob of Patna that this step has secured all Bahar to the English interest. That a Perwannah is likewise drawing out for the exclusive privilege of purchasing Salt Petre, that they cannot avoid differing greatly in opinion from us on the subject of requesting the Nabob to have a large force at Hugly to be ready for assistance against our enemies; that such a publication of our fears and weaknesses would, they think, be a step the most impolitic and the most prejudicial to the Companys' interest that could be taken. That Meir Jaffeir has long since forgot the services rendered to him by

the English and looks upon them as encroachers upon his power, reputation and authority. That the consequence of their application to the Nabob would occasion a great coolness in his behaviour towards us and a refusal to fulfill thereof his treaty neither does the prospect of danger appeal to them so near as to oblige them to make known our apprehensions of the French to the provinces. That a stout body of war a thousand sepoys has been raised within these few days and Col. Clive begs leave to recommend it to us to purchase as many small arms as can be procured."¹

THE DUTCH

Weary of his subjection and dependence on the English, Mir Jafar was suspected of planning to get rid from the clutches of the English with the assistance of the Dutch who were reportedly fitting out an armament at Batavia for the Bay of Bengal and had sailed to the mouth of Hughli in October. It consisted of 700 Europeans and 800 trained Malaysian board the fleet; while at Chinsura their settlement on the Hughli, there were one hundred and fifty Dutch soldiers, as well as native levies. To meet this danger Clive could raise in and about Calcutta 330 men and 1200 sepoys. In addition, he organised two tiny bodies of volunteers. The British ships were ordered to sail up the Hughli, and strengthen the batteries that commanded the river. At the beginning of November, Forde and Knox also arrived from Masulipatam and joined Clive. Knox was assigned the command of the batteries, and Forde that of the troops on the field.

In the second week of November the Dutch began hostilities by seizing some small English vessels and burning the English agent's house at Fulta. Forde started to meet them with 100 men of the Hundred-and-First, 400 sepoys and four guns. On the 23rd he encamped in a suburb of Chandernagar, three miles distant from Chinsura. The Dutch told off 120 Europeans and 300 sepoys from Chinsura to prevent Forde's further advance. This

1. *Select Committee Proceedings, Bengal, March 20, 1758, pp. 37-38.*

Forde's forces were further augmented to 320 Europeans infantry, 50 volunteer cavalry, 800 sepoys, and 100 native cavalry when Knox joined him on 24th evening. The naval battle also went against the Dutch when after landing the troops on the western bank, which were to march to Chinsura, the Dutch ship dropped down the stream again to Melancholy Point. There the Dutch fleet which consisted of seven ships was attacked by the three armed East Indiamen under Captain Wilson and captured six of them on the spot. The one that escaped fell an easy prey to two British men-of-war that had arrived at the mouth of the river. "This splendid little action cut off the Dutch troops from their base and ensured that any reverse must be fatal to them. Nor was that long incoming. On the same evening Forde learned that the Dutch army would come up with him on the morrow, and wrote to Clive for instruction." Clive was playing whist when the letter reached him. He put down his cards, and without leaving the table wrote on the back of the letter, "Dear Forde, fight them immediately. I will send you the Order in Council tomorrow." Then taking up his hand again, he went on with game."¹

"Accordingly, early in the morning of the 25th Forde took up a position midway between Chandernagore and Chinsura and astride of the road that connects them."² His right rested on the village of Badra and his left on a mango-grove where he posted his four guns. He occupied both the villages; his front was covered by a broad, deep ravine. About ten o'clock the Dutch forces were seen approaching over the plain; and as soon as they were within range, Forde's artillery opened fire. The Dutch advanced none the less with great firmness, until to their dismay they found themselves stopped by the ravine, of which they knew nothing. The leading files perforce halted abruptly, while the rear, not understanding the cause, pushed on and threw the whole body into

1. Fortescue, *A History of the British Army*, Vol. II, p. 469.

2. *Ibid.*

confusion. Forde continued to ply them with artillery and musketry until they wavered, and then seized the moment to hurl his handful of European Cavalry at them. This threw them into still greater disorder; and the native horse charging in their turn completed the rout. The entire force of the Dutch, excepting sixty Dutchmen and two hundred and fifty Malayis, was killed, wounded or taken. Thus the Dutch adventure ended into complete failure.

Shahzada/Shah Alam

The Mughal Prince, Ali Gauhar, eldest son of the Mughal Emperor, was at this time in rebellion against his father. He was styled as the Prince of Bengal in the Imperial Durbar. He laid claim to the three provinces and attacked Patna on April 3, 1759. The invasion was anticipated and Clive was on his way to Patna. But before Clive could reach there, Ramnarain gave battle to the Prince, defeated and put him to flight.

Again in December, 1759, the Shahzada, who had now become the Emperor Shah Alam, advanced upon Patna with a far more formidable force. The English had now assumed the role of the protector of the Nawab of Bengal and hence took a leading part in the war with Shah Alam. Clive had by now received reinforcement from Madras under Caillaud which consisted of 200 men. To this force were added 350 Europeans (300 men of the 101st foot and 50 European artillery), 1000 sepoys and six field guns. The Nawab's native troops, under his son Miran, consisted of 15,000 men and 24 guns. With this force Caillaud left for Patna on 18th January, 1760.

The Emperor Shah Alam appeared before Patna at the beginning of February. The garrison at Patna comprised of 100 regular European infantry and 70 European artillery with two guns and eight companies under the command of captain Cochrane. Added to these were native levies from all quarters, and the total troops numbered about forty thousand men. Raja Ramnarain, the native Governor, held supreme command at Patna, and without waiting for Caillaud to arrive, he moved out on the 9th of February and gave battle to the Emperor. Cochrane held back and

took no part in the action. Ramnarain fought bravely but the Emperor's cavalry charged impetuously and broke through Ramnarain's line. This threw Ramnarain's army into confusion and many deserted in whole bodies to the Emperor. But the rest continued to put up a determined resistance. Ramnarain sent an urgent message for assistance to Cochrane, who fought his way to him with his Europeans and four companies of sepoys and escorted Ramnarain into Patna. The rest of the sepoys were overwhelmed by numbers, and only twentyfive of them, under an English sergeant, succeeded in rejoining their comrades. Cochrane and five out of six British officers also fell in the action and the command devolved upon the surgeon, Dr. Fullerton, who, with the few survivors, retreated to Patna.

The Emperor did not follow up his success and allowed Ramnarain, who had also opened negotiations with him, to strengthen the defence of Patna. The city was invested but the seige was not pressed, and the news of Caillaud's march obliged the Emperor to march eastward to meet him. On the 19th both forces came within striking distance, but a heavy storm of rain forbade any movement on either side till the 22nd on which date Caillaud was reinforced by the small remnant of regular troops from Patna. Caillaud reconnoitred the Emperor's position, and occupied two villages which lay a mile beyond his own camping-ground and posted a company of sepoys in each which were later reinforced with the whole of the battalion of the sepoys and a company of Europeans and two guns. With some heavy guns, cavalry and infantry, the Emperor marched against him. Caillaud's disposition of forces was: "The Europeans occupied the centre, with three guns on either hand, and on the outer flank of each division of guns stood a battalion of Sepoys, with a single company in each village. The second line was assigned to Meerun's troops, which were directed to take station in the rear of the British with their cavalry extended to right and left; instead of which Meerun massed the whole of them in a deep column to the right rear of the British, showing a front of but two hundred yards

with the whole of his fifteen thousand men."¹

"Shah Alum was not slow to take the advantage offered to him by such a disposition. Advancing with his army in three divisions, he launched one of them upon the left of Caillaud's line, as if to seize the village of Seerpore, on which rested the British left flank. Caillaud, thereupon pushed his guns slightly forward and raked this division with so hot a fire as speedily to check the movement. But in truth his attack was but a feint, though one party of horse did indeed sweep round Caillaud's left to the rear of Seerpore, where, being unable to resist the temptation to plunder the camp, it passed at once out of action. The remainder wheeled rapidly away to Caillaud's right, and together with the two other divisions fell fiercely upon Meerun's unwieldy column, which showed little sign of resisting the attack. Caillaud, therefore, moved the whole of his six guns to the village on his right and opened a heavy cannonade upon the flank of Meerun's assailants, but, notwithstanding the cross-fire of the British battery and of Meerun's artillery, the Mogul horse charged gallantly home, drove Meerun's gunners from their guns, and threatened to make havoc of his entire force. Worse than this, four of the British gun-carriages broke down in the rough heavy ground whereon they were posted, and for a time the guns were out of action. It was a critical moment, but Caillaud was equal to it. Taking personal command of the right-hand battalion of Sepoys, he led them straight upon the enemy's flank, poured in a volley at forty yards' range, and charged with the bayonet. The Emperor's troops recoiled in heavy, confused masses, and the Sepoys plied the steel among them with murderous effect. This counter-attack gave time to Meerun's cavalry to rally, when they fell on with vigour and scattered the enemy in all directions. In half an hour Shah Alum's host had vanished from the field."² But this could neither turn the Emperor out of Bihar nor crush his spirit. Leaving the English army in the field, he fell back some 16 miles. Caillaud was

1. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 53.

2. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 53-54.

impatient to pursue his success and end the campaign. But Shah Alam marched towards Bengal, and was hastening to occupy certain districts which had promised him support. Meeran and Caillaud came in hot pursuit, but the Emperor escaped to the south-east.

On the 4th of April Mir Jafar himself joined his son with 500 of the Hundred-and-first, 500 sepoys, and a few artillerymen with six light guns. Caillaud then sent two hundred Europeans under Captain Fischer to garrison Murshidabad. The pursuit of Shah Alam, was restarted and on the 7th April, Shah Alam's camp was discovered on the south bank of the Dummoda. The Emperor, however, again dodged his pursuers and setting fire to his tents withdrew beyond the reach of Caillaud's troops. He suddenly doubled round and hastened back towards Patna.

The Emperor's clever move, which was not discovered for some days, threw Caillaud into confusion particularly because Shah Alam had been careful to leave a large body of Marathas behind him to deal with Caillaud in case he attempt to pursue him. Patna was held but by a handful of sepoys, and Mr. Law, the head of the French factory at Kasimbazar, with a corps of French adventurer, was waiting before the city to join the Emperor. Caillaud, ordered Knox, to march to Rajmahal with two hundred men of the Hundred-and-first, one battalion of sepoys, and a detachment of artillery with two guns; cross the Ganges there and thence to follow the left bank to Patna, to recross the river there and reach Patna. Caillaud himself retired to Murshidabad.

Meanwhile, at Patna preparations for defence "were pressed with great energy by Shitab Roy, a Hindoo officer of great ability and pre-eminent courage, and by Dr. Fullerton, who was the only English officer present. Shortly afterwards the seige was opened under the scientific direction of Law. The walls were speedily breached in several places, and an escalade, attempted five days after the opening of the trenches, was only with difficulty foiled by the bravery of Fullerton and Shitab Roy. At dawn of the 28th of April a second attack was delivered, when the Emperor's flag was actually planted on the ramparts

by one of his bravest officers; but Fullerton and his little band of Sepoys hurried to the spot, and after a desperate conflict hurled back the assailants with heavy loss. But the walls of the city now lay open in all directions, another assault might come at any moment, and the defenders, worn out by fatigue after their success, were reduced almost to despair".¹ Then Knox's detachment was sighted, which in 13 days march under the "Indian sun had traversed three hundred miles, the passage of the Ganges included. Boats were sent across to them, and before sunset the whole force had entered the city."²

The arrival of this detachment virtually saved Patna. At noon on the following day Knox attacked the Emperor's troops when they were preparing their midday meal and captured the whole of their guns, stores and ammunitions. The Emperor abandoned the siege and fell back to Gaya, some sixty miles southward. The English were also able to foil the attempt of the Nawab of Purneah, Khadim Hussain, to join Shah Alam with an army of sixteen thousand horse and foot.

Meanwhile, relations between the English and Mir Jafar had considerably deteriorated. The Nawab was unable to meet the extravagant demands of the English and resented their dominance. Vansittart, the new Governor, had taken over at Calcutta. Holwell, while acquainting him with the political situation in the provinces, spells out the cause of English displeasure with the Nawab :

"So from a judgment of the present state of things in Bengal it will be needful to retrospect on the late revolution of the year 1757, when necessity and a just resentment of the most cruel injuries obliged us to enter into a plan to deprive Surajud Dowla of his government which was accordingly done and Mir Jaffier Ally Cawn fixed by us at the head of the Provinces on certain conditions and under a treaty of alliance offensive and defensive.

A short space of time fully proved how unworthy [man was] raised, the conditions of the treaty could not

1. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 56-57.

2. *Ibid.* Vol. III, p. 57.

be obtained from the Nabob without being a manner extorted from him and by a thousand shifts and evasions it was plain to the world that no single article would ever have been complied with had the Nabob been invested with the power sufficient to have prevented it or could he have divested himself of his own fears and apprehensions from our resentment.

Tankas on the lands were, however, granted for the payment of the stipulated sums at particular times by which the Roy Royen Dewans Mutsuddies and every Harpy employed in the zamindary and revenue became our implacable enemies and consequently a party was soon raised at the Durbar headed by the Nabob's son Miran and Raajebullub who were daily planning scheme to shake off their dependence on the English and continually urging the Nabob until this was affected [that] his government was a name only. The Nabob, somewhat irritated by the protection given to Rajah Doolubram and weak and irresolute in himself, fell too soon into these sentiments.

The first step taken to accomplish this measure of independence was to (assassinate) and take off under one pretence or other every minister and officer at the Durbar whom they knew were attached to the English in consequence of which Coja Hoddy and Cowam Aly Khan first and second Buxey were assassinated in November and December 1758 after many attempts on the persons on Kheim Khan, Golam Shaw his uncle and brother. They were at last obliged to seek an asylum with the Shaw Zadda in 1759. Roydoolut, his son and four brothers were [prosecuted] on no account but that of the various informations he gave us and his former attachment. His family would have fallen a sacrifice had they not been rescued by force of Arms. Amir Beg Khan would from the same cause have suffered the same fate had he not given his solemn engagement to quit the Kingdom which he accordingly did.

The next day project of the Durbar appeared by every concurring subsequent circumstance to be a secret negotiation with the Dutch for transporting troops from Batavia into these Provinces, that with their united force

a stop might be put to the power of the English. This scheme was conducted by Rajas Raayebullob on the one part and Foocratoojar for the Dutch on the other about October, November 1758 the period when Deccan expedition took place and the garrison was much reduced.

Soon after the Provinces were invaded by the Shahzada on the side of Patna and Colonel Clive with our military and sepoys joined the Nabob and his troops and by forced marches [torn] arrived just in time to save that city and province and drive the Prince though the undoubted heir to the Kingdom beyond the Curramnasar and brought the Budgepore etc. Countries into subjection to the Nabob.

The Prince more than once wrote to the Colonel offering any terms for the Company and himself on condition the English to quit the Nabob and join his arms but the Colonel thinking it incompatible with our treaty of alliance with the Nabob gave the Prince no encouragement. in June 1759 and the two Nabobs arrived at the city about the same time with full conviction of our firm attachment to his government and family [torn] these obligations will appear by and by.

The Nabob thinking themselves now better established in the government and screened by such a sure and powerful support as our arms began 'o set no bounds to their cruelties, oppressions and exactions from those who had any thing to be plundered off and this barely received a check from the severe and frequent warnings of Col. Clive to the Nabob on a conduct which he foretold him must from the general detestation of his people [bring] destruction of himself, family and country. His troops clamorous at the same time for their pay whilst the Nabob in place of [meeting] with the sums he had acquired by repeated assassinations, the just demands of his zamin-dars and troops, lavished the same in boundless extravagance.

'About the latter end of July 1759 the young Nabob arrived on a pretended visit to Colonel Clive but the real motive was to negotiate if possible the delivery of Rajah Doolubram and two or three others, to..... [torn] the

surrender of the Tanks lands on security, the borrowing of a large sum of money of us etc. In these the son proving unsuccessful a member of the Board and Select Committee was sent to accompany him to the city to reconcile the Nabob to the negative his own son had received at Calcutta and at the same time to intimate to him the advice we had received that a large armament was fitting out at Batavia destinated for Bengal and to penetrate if possible his sentiments on this occasion and what resolution he would come to in case that force arrived in the River.

He was not to be reconciled to the refusals his son met with but determined to try his own power and declare his intention to pay the Colonel himself in September which he did with success equal to his son. He seemed to make light of the Dutch intelligence and not to give credit to it though he discovered much perplexity however he wrote a letter to the Colonel demanding our assistance by virtue of the treaty of Alliance in case the Dutch troops came into the River.

The armament arrived during his visit. His stay after that was short, his mind much embarrassed and his whole subsequent conduct gave undoubted proofs that the Dutch forces were arrived by his invitations. That such were the sentiments of Colonel Clive and the Council appears from the narrative of that Dutch Business transmitted to the Hon'ble the Court of Directors and to our several Admirals. A perusal of this narrative will convince the impartial that the Nabob in his behaviour was guilty of a most flagitious breach of the article of the treaty of Alliance and that from this period no terms whatever should have been preserved with him after such unexampled treachery and ingratitude to which by way of illustration we may add the subsequent forces carried on between the Nabob and the Dutch as set forth in the several letters between Mr. Holwell and the President at Moraudbaug on this subject by reference to which it will appear most manifest that the Nabob's real intentions never were to distress effectually that people but on the contrary were only aimed to deceive and amuse us. Witness the private orders and

instructions given to Mir Cossim Ally Khan so opposite to his public ones when he was sent down to demolish the new works at Chinchura. In the apparent delays of his service Cossim Ally Khan suffered much in the opinion of the late President though unjustly as we subsequently learnt he was acting strictly conformable to the private orders of the Nabob.

In the beginning of the year 1760 the Shah Zaddah invaded again the provinces with a force more respectable than the preceeding year both in troops and commanders. By the revolt of Comgaar Khan, Golan Shaw, Bheim Khan and others the Nabob by this time having made himself and his family so universally hated that we may justly say there was hardly a man in the Province that did not wish success to the Prince.

Colonel Clive resigned the government early in February 1760 about which time the Moratoes entered the Province from the southward and penetrated into the Burdwan country making a considerable diversion in favour of the Prince. The Nabob demanded a body of our troops, sepoys and field artillery for the defence of this country to join his under the command of Mir Cossim Ally Khan which was granted but their use was frustrated by the Nabobs pusillanimous irregular and contradictory orders to his General Cossim Ally Khan to march with our troops to Cutwah and the city in place of marching directly to the southward. Thus this country fell a prey to the Moratoes and a stop was put to the collecting our tankas on which was our greatest dependence and expectation for the service of the year/ [vide military correspondence in the month of February and March.]

Our troops under the command of Major Caillaud had taken the field in conjunction with the Nabob's under command of his son sometime before the Colonel's departure for Europe and shaped their route towards Patna whilst the Nabob himself remained in the neighbourhood of Rajamhol a check on Cuddein Hossein Khan, Nabob of Purnea (then in rebellion) until Subats advance recalled him to the city.

A regular and particular detail of the transactions of this

laborious campaign will not be expected here as the progress of it will present itself in the course of the military correspondence laid before the Committee. Therefore general remarks on the success, effects, probable consequence will be sufficient.

This like the former ones has produced no definite action or stroke to lay the least foundation of Peace to the Provinces. In the course of this campaign three [torn] sure and important opportunities were lost by the cowardice of both the Nabobs, the first when the young Nabob refused to join the Major in the immediate pursuit of the Shah Zaddah when routed near Patna. The second when the old Nabob refused to comply with the Major's earnest request and demands to cross his horse over the Burdwan river and attack the Prince when united with Subat & Co. The Third when in the late pursuit of Cuddein Hossein Khan the young Nabob refused to lead or detach his horse to the Major's assistance by which a general action might have been brought about but on the contrary he kept encamped two or three miles in the Major's rear as if his intentions were to leave our troops without horse a sacrifice to the enemy.

Had the most been made of either of these favourable opportunities the stroke had in all human probability been decisive as it is it only proves that we continued to support our swords in support of a family most unworthy the government they have usurped by our assistance and this to the manifest hazard and ruin of the Company's trade and concerns.

On the near approach of the Major to Patna he received a Phermaund from the Prince of which he advised the Board and promised to forward a copy but no wonder in the course of an extraordinary and fatiguing campaign it should escape his memory. On his arrival in the Beerboon country after the unexpected march he formed upon his default. The President received intelligence that the old Nabob had actually a vacqueel in the Shah Zaddah's Camp and that he was negotiating a separate treaty with him. This appeared to have so dangerous a tendency that any means were eligible to obtain the truth of it.

The late President by a third hand produced Assud Jumma Cawn Rajah of Beerboon and his uncle Comgaar Cawn to be wrote to on the subject of the Nabob vacqueel and treaty. This soon produced a Phermaund from the Prince enclosing a copy of the Nabob's Urdasht. The President made no reply to the Phermaund but returned a short one to Comgaar Khan's letter which accompanied the Phermaund intimating that copies carried little validity where originals were in being.

A few days before the Prince began his retreat from the Hills the President received a second Phermaund from him enclosing the original Urdasht from the Nabob. All that can be said for or against belief being either given to the authenticity of the copy or original will appear on the face of the correspondence in two letters from the President to the Major under date the 22nd and 24th of April last and to Mr. Hastings the 20th of the same month. To these we may further remark that if they are forgeries they have yet this corroborating signature of truth that the whole tenor of the Nabob's conduct most exactly tallies with the term of the Urdasht but to resume the course of the campaign to the present time.

Patna is relieved and secure for the present. Cuddien Hussein Cawn is dispossessed of his government of Purnea and drove out of the country, but with all his treasure and Valuable effects to the reproach and infamy of the Young Nabob's memory so that after the rains he will easily join the Prince with the essentials of War which he only wants to harass the provinces five years longer. The young Nabob is taken off by a flash of lightening and our troops are gone into Quarters after having done as much or more than could have been expected from Men so wretchedly supported by those very people for whose preservation they endured every distress and fatigue and braved a variety of Deaths.

The Prince has found means to preserve himself and forces a footing on this side the Soane and in the neighbourhood of Patna. It is said Camgarr Cawn has forsaken the cause of the Prince which appears most improbable not only on account of his having no other chance for re-

imburing himself [torn] but because we have undoubtedly intelligence that 3000 of his troops have lately joined his Nephew Assud Jumma Cawn who has thrown off his allegiance to the Nabob. These troops are doubtless lodged to make an early and important diversion at the opening of the next campaigns by entering the Burdwan country as soon as the Prince begins to be in motion above and thus our supplies from thence will be again cut off and the company's affairs reduced to the last extremity of distress unless the approaching ships of the season relieve us or the whole Tankas on those lands could be collected during the Rains, the latter is hardly possible in any serviceable degrce and the former carry very little probability. The late proposal of the Nabob's to pay our Balances and resume his lands is devoutly to be wished that but it is likewise to be feared he has no meaning in it.

The various reasons urged against the measure of supporting the present government longer on the plan we have been some time pursuing to the heavy injury of the Company with various expedients to rescue them from manifest approaching ruin are set forth..... However the death of the young Nabob (if made a proper use of) seems to point out a middle way if things are not gone too far already to admit of any other than the divesting this family of the Government altogether the President's letter to Mr. Hastings of the 16th on the subject of a successor to the young Nabob's post.

Respecting all matters relative to the Dutch and the Nabob the Dutch and us the Tankas and obstructions raised by the Nabob on our collecting them as also the late secret treaty between the Nabob and the Morattoes and they will appear on the face of the correspondence without exaggeration."¹

The review presented to Vansittart makes it very clear that the English were in no mood to let Mir Jafar remain in office any longer. Their choice for occupying that high office now fell on Mir Kasim with whom a treaty was sign-

1. Select Committee Proceedings, Bengal dated 4-8-1760.

ed on September 27, 1760. Mir Jafar was forced to make room for Mir Kasim and the country powers were informed about the change by Vansittart who wrote:

"Whereas the ministers of the Nawab Meer Mahomed Jaffier Cawn Bahadur through their misconduct were daily bringing the affairs of the Government to ruin for this reason I came from Calcutta to Muradavad and for the good of the administration laid before him the seven following representations.

First, the English forces employed against his enemies at Azimabad receive no pay.

Secondly, the troops for the government stationed in that Province on account of the long arrears withheld from them are dissatisfied and disaffected to the service.

Thirdly, the troops at Muxadavad lately surrounded the Palace for their arrears in a most tumultuous manner and are daily ripe for disturbances.

Fourthly, I have plainly discovered that the ministers of this court led on by the rapaciousness of their dispositions have laid aside all justice, plundered the poor without cause and murdered many men and families from the lowest rank to the highest without reason as is notorious to all the world.

Fifthly, the scarcity of grain etc. is so great as was never known in this country which can proceed from no other cause than the mismanagement of the ministers of the government.

Sixthly, formerly at the request of the English company a mint was established in Calcutta and orders were issued that the siccas of Calcutta should pass of equal currency with those of Muxadabad but by the knowing of the bad men in office they have never been allowed to pass.

Seventhly, the Shahzadah is preparing for war and is daily penetrating further into the Province whilst the forces of the government and the English from want of money are dissatisfied from hence it appears that the provinces are on the point of being lost and the company's affairs on the brink of ruin. If your excellency from the grief occasioned by the loss of the deceased Nabob (your son) should be deeply affected as to be incapable of at-

tending to the remedying of such great evils in the country it is proper that you appoint some person of capacity from amongst your sons in the place and with the authority of the said Nabob. Napier ool Moolt who may take upon him all these affairs, regulate the business of the government and remove all the difficulties which it is oppressed with that your excellency may sit down quiet and at ease and freed from these troubles cast the shade of your protection over all your people.

He replied I will consider upon these points and give an answer but he returned no answer on the contrary entered into consultations with the same wicked ministers. For this cause I and Colonel Caillaud with the Nabob Imtear O'Dowla Nasir Oal Mooth Cossim Ally Cawn Bahadur waited upon the Nabob and addressed him in a proper manner to settle affairs. He answered that on account of his age and grief for the death of his late son he was no longer capable of exerting himself with vigour but desired to go to Calcutta and spend the remainder of his days in quiet. Thus resigning the Subahdurree he appointed the Nabob aforesaid in his room and handed over to him the whole charge of the Nazamut. He is accordingly employed in paying the arrears of the troops etc. and in regulating all the other affairs. To acquaint you with these particulars I wrote you this letter."

The operations against Shah Alam were renewed in early January, 1760. The task was now entrusted to Carnac who engaged the Emperor's army at Suan, on 10th January. The action was going in favour of the Emperor but an accidental shot from a field gun wounded the elephant on which Shah Alam was riding, and the animal carried the Emperor away from the field. This spread panic and confusion among the Emperor's troops, and they fled from the field. Though the action was not decisive, Shah Alam made overtures for a cessation of hostilities, and on the 14th of February, was escorted by British troops into Patna. Here Mir Kasim was induced to meet him and he was confirmed as Nawab of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.

76 *Plassey to Buxar*

After sometime Shah Alam left Bihar for Delhi. Thus was the threat from the Emperor removed at least for some time to come.

THE BATTLE OF BUXAR

In the third battle of Panipat the Marathas received a crushing blow at the hands of the Afghan invader. The Emperor having also left Bengal to claim his throne at Delhi, Bengal was left to its own fate. Mir Kasim, the new Nawab, freed from anxiety from the side of the Emperor and the Marathas invasion subsiding, tried to establish his authority in his own dominion. The British also tried to take the maximum advantage of the Maratha defeat and thought of assuming sovereign power in Bengal and Bihar.

Mir Kasim shifted his capital to Monghyr, fortified the town and trained and equipped his army in the European fashion under Reinhard, a German, later known as Sumroo, and Markar, an Armenian. Within a year 25,000 infantry and a regiment of gunners, almost all European, was raised and a cannon-foundry was also established. The British did not like Mir Kasim's efforts to become strong. While the differences over trade privilege were being settled between the representative of the Company and the Nawab, Ellis, the Company's agent at Patna, prepared to capture Patna city. Mir Kasim's protests were not heeded and Ellis, who had 300 European and 2500 sepoys at his disposal, attacked and captured Patna, almost unresisted in the early hours of 25th June, 1763.

Mir Kasim had despatched Markar and Sumroo with a brigade each for the defence of Patna. Markar arrived at the eastern gate within two hours of the British attack. The gate was defended by detachment of British artillery with two guns. The assault was so skilfully conducted by Markar that the defenders had to fly in panic after spiking their guns. The city was recovered and the English soldiers took shelter within the factory which was invested by Markar. He pressed them so hard that on

26 June, they crossed the Ganges and fled towards Chupra. Markar's brigade was chasing the British and Sumroo's brigade also crossed the Ganges near Arrah and barred their retreat. The English had decided to take a stand at the village Manjee. and had taken position in the usual formation, "with his Europeans in the centre, two battalion of Sepoys to right and left of them, and a third battalion in reserve. The first attack of the enemy was gallantly repelled by the Sepoys on the right, who, having exhausted their ammunition, charged with the bayonet, ...Reinforcements arrived to strengthen the enemy, and at length, after Carstairs with eight other officers and fifty European soldiers, besides a number of Sepoys, had fallen, the remainder of the British force laid down their arms."¹ They were imprisoned and sent to Patna, where most of the foreigners and sepoys entered Mir Kasim's service. The remainders were stripped of their arms and equipment and set free. This swift action annihilated one-fourth of the British force in Bengal.

The council at Calcutta declared Mir Kasim deposed and Mir Jafar was restored to his original post. But the issue was finally to be settled at the battlefield. Orders for the march of the British troops were already issued in April and Major Thomas Adams was selected to command the British army against Mir Kasim. He had under him a force of eight hundred and fifty European (remains of Coote's regiment, four companies of the Hundred-and-first and a corps of French infantry under Lt. Martine), fifteen hundred native soldiers and twelve guns. A small force with a convoy was also on its way to join him from Burdwan. Adams sent 50 men of his own regiment, three companies of sepoys and two guns under Captain Long to reinforce it. But Mir Kasim had by this time already captured the British factory at Murshidabad. His main body moved to the neighbourhood of Plassey while Taki Khan with 4,000 horses but without a single gun was told off to intercept the party coming from Burdwan.

1. Fortescue: *A History of the British Army*, Vol. III, p. 68.

The convoy was escorted by six companies of sepoys with one gun under the command of Lieutenant William Glenn, with Ensign Roberts as second in command. On the south bank of the Adjai the first encounter with the contingent under Taki Khan took place. Glenn had taken up position on rising ground amid a network of ravines and had decided to fight a defensive action. Keeping his treasure and cattle in the rear, he lured Taki Khan to attack without reconnoitring the ground which was too much broken to be favourable to cavalry. Taki Khan led a furious attack on the English but the attack was repulsed by the fire of musketry. But this could not break the determination of Taki Khan who repeatedly attacked with the greatest courage and resolution. "Thrice the gun and treasure were captured, and thrice the Sepoys, a new regiment which had never been in action, rallied under Glenn's leadership and recovered them at bayonet's point; until at last, after four hours of severe fighting, the enemy drew off in despair."¹ Giving an account of the action Glenn wrote: "I marched from Burdwan the 9th instant and arrived within one mile of Cutwa where I received orders to join Captain Long, but could not march past Cutwa and being in the route of Mahomed Tucky Cawn's troops, but was obliged to attempt it, which we did yesterday about 12 o'clock and as I had foreseen they fell upon our rear in a village which brought on an Engagement about 3 o'clock P.M. which lasted till sunset, when after several times being reduced to a few men and the gun we got the best of it, and drove them by heaps headlong into the river and then pursued the rest till dark, they say there was about 6 or 7000 horse and a great number of foot with fire arms. They behaved bravely. But our superior fire and the advantage we had of the ground gave it in our favour for although our Sepoys behaved with the greatest resolution, in spite of fire they were three times broke and as often rallied again. But the gun was what saved us all for we fired above 80 round and 20 grape out of her in less than three hours, we made a great slaughter

1. *Ibid.*, Vol. III p. 70.

among the enemy for the ditches were lined with dead bodies and our people have got several of their horses and many are lying killed on the spot. We have lost but few, I believe they do not amount to 30 Men killed and wounded which is nothing considering the long and hot action we had. We are now cleaning our arms, and getting ready against Captain Long's arrival which we expect will be in one hour and then we may soon drive the remainder of them across the river."¹

In the skirmish the English suffered thirty casualties i.e eleven killed and nineteen wounded. The arrival of reinforcement under Long on the following day strengthened the English position considerably and there remained no further immediate danger. They then advanced upon Cutwa, attacked the town and after encountering 5000 infantry for four hours took the town in the morning of 14th July 1763. A large number of the Nawab's troops were killed and the rest crossed over to the other side of the river. The booty that fell into the English hands included three guns, number of bullocks and grain. The English casualties were Ensign Robesty and seven sepoys killed and 19 sepoys wounded.

Although Glenn had occupied the city of Cutwa its fort was still held by the Nawab's army under Taki Khan. Its reduction was not attempted before the arrival of Adams two days after. On 19th July Adams advanced to give battle to Taki Khan who had occupied an entrenched position opposite the fort of Cutwa. Careful disposition of his forces had protected his right flank by the river, his right front secured by a battery of heavy guns and his left front covered by a marsh. But Taki's irregular troops held back in the rear at a distance on account of some differences with Taki Khan. This left his left flank unprotected. His army included a chosen corps of Afghans, Rohillas, and Persians, who bore a very high character alike as soldiers and as marksmen. Ignoring the irregulars who had practically withdrawn from the battle and exhorting his troops, in whose valour he had great confidence, he ask-

1. Home Public Department Proceedings, pp. 995-96, dated 18-7-63.

ed them to put an end to foreign rule in Bengal by a single victory, "The action began with a advance of Adam's cavalry to screen the movement of his infantry. Mohammed Taki hastened to meet them with his best troops, supported by a rocket-battery, which handled the Major's horsemen so rudely that they were fain to fall back. The British line, however, continued its advance and Mohammed Taki, with great numerical superiority in his favour, fought a most desperate fight, apparently alternating the fire of cannon and jezails with furious charges of cavalry. The British stood firmly as was their want, the fire of their artillery and musketry was as deadly as usual, and the horsemen that passed through it unscathed could never break the wall of bayonets."¹

Taki Khan was not dismayed and he fought a very severe action which caused unsteadiness in the English cavalry. To exploit the situation fully he rode off to lead a final and decisive attack. At this critical moment his foot was grazed and his horse killed under him by a cannon-shot, "but heedless of pain he mounted another horse, and placed himself at the head of a chosen corps of Afghan cavalry for a supreme effort against Adam's right flank. That flank rested on a watercourse wherein Adams, with excellent judgement had disposed a single company of Sepoys, concealing the men in the jungle upon the bank. To this point Mohammed Taki now led his Afghan squadrons with all the impetuosity of a dashing and intrepid cavalier. As he swept past the front of the British battalion he was struck by a bullet in the shoulder. He whirled the skirt of his garment over the wound in order to hide the blood, galloped on, followed by his men, into the nullah, and was ascending the opposite bank, when up rose the hidden Sepoys from their ambush and poured a volley full into their faces. A bullet flew into Mohammed Taki's brain, and he fell."² His followers, startled and dismayed, took to flight, leaving behind eight guns, some cattle and a quantity of stores. The army in Cutwa fort

1. Fortescue, *A History of the British Army*, Vol. III, p. 71.

2. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 72.

also fled and Long's detachment promptly occupied it and found there seventeen cannons. The Nawab's army was estimated at ten thousand and appears to have suffered heavy casualties as compared to the English who lost 32 killed and wounded. If the detachment in rear, which had held back, had taken part in the action, Taki Khan would have won the day for Mir Kasim.

The Major halted on the field in sight of the hunting-lodge of Plassey. Here several sepoys of Patna party joined Adams. They informed him that the Nawab was assembling all of his forces and was advancing southward and that he was fortifying Oundha Nulla near Rajamahal. This made clear to Adams that there was no danger for Major Carnac to be invaded. He, therefore, directed him to march upon the other side of the river and join him at Murshidabad. After forming an hospital and a magazine at Cutwa and replenishing supplies, the army resumed its march upon Murshidabad on 23rd July. The Nawab's army was entrenched some two miles south of the city. It retired to its main defences at Sooty, some thirty-five miles to the north-west on the western side of the Bhagirathi, without offering any resistance to Adams. Adams occupied Murshidabad and Mir Jafar was installed as Nawab with due ceremony on the 25th. The English did not rest on their oars. Leaving a small garrison at Murshidabad, Adams, accompanied by Mir Jafar and such other followers as he had been able to collect, advanced further. Adams was reinforced at Murshidabad by 1,000 Europeans and 4,000 Sepoys. Carnac and Knox had also joined him. The army arrived on the plains of Gheria on the 2nd of August. Although Mir Kasim had already entrenched himself a strong position at Sooty from which it was extremely difficult to dislodge him, he having confidence in the numbers and discipline of his troops which comprised of over thirty thousand men, two-thirds of them being cavalry, with twenty guns manned by two hundred Europeans, advanced to give battle to Adams in the open field. "The regular brigades of Sumroo and Markar were in line in the centre, commanding the great road. On their right was a corps of some eight thousand

cavalry and twelve thousand infantry, partly regular and partly irregular troops; and on their left stood a smaller body of irregular cavalry with its left flank resting on the Bagiruttee. Adams, having crossed the Banslee river, formed his troops across the angle between this stream on his left and the Bagiruttee on his right, so that both of his flanks were protected. His line was formed as usual with two European battalions in the centre, Coote's being on the left and the Hundred-and-First on the right, and three Sepoy battalions on either flank of them; and of his ten guns, four were posted in pairs at each extremity of the line, and four more in the intervals between the Europeans and the Sepoys. One battalion of Sepoys, two guns, and the cavalry were held in reserve. With his retreat barred by two rapid streams, Adams, if beaten, could not escape annihilation."¹

Advancing slowly, both the armies brought in action their artillery. The exchange was primarily between the English artillery and the brigades of Marker and Sumroo. While the exchange of fire was going on, a small body of 80 horsemen was told off to attack the British left flank. The gallant horsemen "Charged home, and falling upon the left flank battalion of Sepoys shivered it to fragments. Number of men were cut to pieces, numbers pushed into the river and drowned, and the battalion was almost annihilated. Adams at once ordered up the reserve to its support, and so saved what remnant was left; but meanwhile a large body of the enemy's cavalry had poured through the gap. These now galloped up behind the British left centre, fell with great impetuousity upon the rear of the Coote's regiment, and captured the two guns on its left flank, while at the same time a party of the enemy's rocket-men engaged the hapless regiment in front. It was perilous moment, for Adam's left was shaken if not shattered, and his centre dangerously assailed both in front and rear, so that a determined attack upon his right could hardly have failed to break up his line of battle altogether. Fortunately the leader of the enemy's left division of

1. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 74.

cavalry made but a feeble advance ; and Adams at once wheeled up the Hundred-and-First to clear the front, and the reserve battalion of Sepoys to relieve the rear of Coote's regiment, whereupon that gallant corps quickly recovered itself and recaptured its two lost guns. It was now past noon. The Commander of the hostile cavalry in rear of the British line being wounded, his men began to lose heart, and the leader of the mass of the enemy which was advancing against Adam's centre hesitated and retired. Adams seized the moment to re-form his line and charge with the bayonet ; where upon the whole of Meer Cossim's host began to give way. The brigades of Markas and Sumroo had already commenced their retreat, with perfect discipline but without resistance, as soon as the British centre had regained its order."¹ Only the rocket-men strove to stem the English advance but it was apparently beyond their capacity. The retreat soon became a flight and they fled beyond their entrenchment at Sooty where they could have rallied to make a stand in case they so desired. This was the first real battle fought by the English in Bengal and in it they had almost lost but for the inactiveness of the Brigades under Marker and Sumroo. The booty that Adams captured included 23 guns, fifty boats full of ammunitions of war and large quantity of stores.

The Nawab's losses in men amounted to two hundred dead or seriously wounded. The English losses were heavier. Two British officers were killed, another officer died of fatigue, and five more, together with thirty soldiers, were wounded. Four native officers and one hundred and six men were killed and seven officers and one hundred and sixty-three men wounded. Elated by his success, Adams advanced further, after a brief halt, to face Mir Kasim at Oundha Nala where Mir Kasim had decided to make his final stand. Miserably lacking the physical courage to fight the battle, Kasim remained at Monghyr, although he sent large re-inforcements for his army.

Adams reached Palkipore after a week's march and encamped within four miles of Oundha Nala, the famous pass

1. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 75; *Seir ul Mutakherin*, ii. p. 263.

where the Nawab's army was entrenched. Strategically this position was very advantageous to the Nawab's army. "About five miles to southward of Rajmahal the passage between the Rajmahal hills and the Ganges is straitened by a jutting spur to a gorge, which at its widest point exceeds not a mile, and at its narrowest hardly attains to thirteen hundred yards, in breadth. Across this gorge the enemy had drawn a formidable line of entrenchments, running from the Ganges on the east to a steep isolated hill, which was strongly fortified, on the west; and from this point the line was prolonged in a southerly direction to the ravines and precipices of the main range of hills. The ramparts were sixty feet thick and ten feet high, the parapet above them eighteen feet thick and seven feet high, the ditch before them sixty feet wide and twelve feet deep in water. Batteries were erected at proper intervals, mounting in all upwards of one hundred cannon. About half a mile in rear of the fortifications ran an old line of works and the rivulet called the Oondwa Nullah, the latter in itself as strong natural defence owing to the steepness of its banks. Across the Nullah was thrown a strong bridge, which was strongly guarded and in the interval between the new and the old defences was encamped the whole army of thirty thousand men, including the trained brigades of Sumaroo, Markar, and Aratoon. But even thus the full strength of the position was not exhausted, for almost the entire front of the new entrenchments between the hills and the river was covered by a deep morass, reducing the narrow slip of sound ground, along which ran the road, to a breadth of no more than two hundred yards."¹ Past experience had made the Nawab's army wiser and they did not advance to give battle to Adams leaving their advantageous entrenched position. This forced Adams to advance by the road, which was the only possible access to the Nawab's army's entrenchments. He was perpetually harassed during his slow advance by the party of Nawab's army which stole out of the entrenchments by the foot of the hills and forded the

1. Fortescue, Vol. III. pp. 76-77.

morass in the dark. To meet these attacks Adams threw up two redoubts to cover his front, the one twelve hundred yards, the other seven hundred and fifty yards from the Nawab's line. After putting in about a month's hard work, Adams was able to complete a battery within five hundred yards of the opponent's entrenchment. It was armed with seize-guns which could open fire. On the 3rd of September although this battery opened fire, the effect of the cannonade on the massive earthworks of the Nawab's army was not encouraging. It could only make one very imperfect breach near the gateway by the river.

On the 4th an European deceived Mir Kasim and came over to Adams. He revealed to him that he can point out a ford whereby the British could pass the morass to attack the entrenchments on the hill. Having got the valuable information, Adams arranged his troops. "The grenadiers of Coote's and of the Hundred-and-First, together with two battalions of Sepoys, were placed under command of Captain James Irving, with orders to move out three hours before dawn, ford the morass under the deserters guidance, and fall upon the isolated hill on the enemy's right. The remainder of the army was at the same time to march quietly out of camp into the approaches, one division under Captain Moran to make a false attack on the breach by the river, and the reserve under Major Carnac to act as occasion might dictate. The flare of a torch was appointed to be signal from Irving which should launch Moran's force into action; and Adams, having taken every precaution which human foresight could devise, sent forth his troops to their desperate adventure."¹

Irving's column of one thousand men, accordingly, carrying sealing-ladders with it, proceeded silently through the darkness, and plunged straight into the swamp. They floundered through the knee-deep, waist-deep, shoulder-deep, half mile morass and reached at the edge of the Nawab's army's entrenchment. The Nawab's commanders had treated their position impregnable and in utter negli-

1. *Ibid.*, Vol. III., p. 78.

gence had kept no watch. The officers were more occupied with wine and dancing girls than with military vigilance. Such officers were hardly expected to put up any resistance and when actual war came naturally opted to fly than to fight. Irving found no ditches before the ramparts or on the hills and silently planted ladders and scaled it without trouble. Soldiers found asleep under the parapet were murdered by the English without noise by a hand press over their mouth and a bayonet thrust into their chests; while the grenadiers were swarming up the steep ascent to the stockade. The Nawab's army discovered the English and gave the alarm. But it was too late and the grenadiers had by then nearly captured the stockade and killed all the soldiers found there.

Irving then gave the signal by a torch. Moran's column caught the signal immediately and under cover of the cannonade marched at once upon the breach by the gate. The passage of the ditch was hazardous and the breach was so narrow as to admit only one man at a time. The Nawab's army was not only confused but had no will to resist and the English were able to scale the rampart and open the gate. The English army entered and attacked bewildered opponents. It was still barely day light when the Nawab's soldiers fled in confusion for the bridge over Oundha Nala, ignorant of the fact that guards were already stationed by the bridge with instructions to shoot down all deserters or fugitives. So many poor soldiers were killed by the guards that the passage "was speedily blocked by a heap of corpses; and there followed such a scene of panic as has rarely been matched in the history of war. The few fighting men that attempted to make a stand in the old works were speedily overpowered by the British, and the rest fled wildly, they knew not whither, some hurling themselves into the Ganges, where many were drowned, but the great mass plunging into the Oondwa Nullah, where the press and the steepness of the banks brought death to hundreds. Others skirted the hills, by which track only, though many perished amid the precipices and ravines, the bulk of those that escaped found safety . . . it is said that some thousands of the enemy lost

their lives in the action and in the flight; while the tide of fugitives, unstemmed by the fortified town of Rajmahal, unchecked by two passes as formidable as the Ondwa Nullah itself, flowed on and on till it brake at last on the walls of Mongeer, a hundred miles away, and brought to Meer Cossim the tidings that the decisive battle had been fought and lost."¹

The factors which accounts for the English victory were their good fortune, skill and daring. The Nawab's army lost due to the dearth of able commanders, their utter negligence and voluptuous tenor of life. With all their skill the English had to pay due price for their victory. They lost one European officer and five men killed, two officers and thirteen men wounded and one hundred and two sepoys were killed and wounded. The booty that fell into their hands included one hundred cannon, large quantities of stores, and a vast number of horses and cattle. Adams now advanced towards Monghyr on 6th Sept. Arriving before Monghyr by the end of September the advanced detachment began to open trenches and when after the main body joined them on the 4th of October, the batteries opened fire on the garrison on the 8th. Mir Kasim did not have the courage to face the invader and fled to Patna leaving the garrison to its fate which surrendered after three days. After occupying Monghyr, Adams continued his march to Patna. Mir Kasim, however, withdrew from Patna also and encamped at a place some 20 miles from Patna. Sumroo's brigade and a detachment of cavalry accompanied him.

Meanwhile, Adams arrived and encamped on the eastern side of Patna on 28th October. "Patna was a fortified place of considerable strength, its northern face abutting on the river, while the three other sides were protected by thick rampart and by a wide and deep ditch. At the north-eastern corner stood the citadel, an enclosure of rhomboidal form with thick walls of masonry, to which Meer Cossim had added on the eastern or external side an outer rampart of earth to the height of twenty feet. These walls were

1. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 80.

strengthened by flanking towers, wherein cannon were mounted, and the eastern face was further fortified by a broad ditch'.¹ The invaders concentrated their attack against the north-eastern angle of the citadel but due to the many determined sallies by the garrison it could achieve nothing. The sepoyes in the trenches were then reinforced with European troops. It was only by the 5th of November that two practicable breaches could be made, one in the north-east angle of the citadel and the other on the eastern face near the eastern gate. The assault was then planned for the next day and the force was divided into three parties. The forces under captain Champion, six companies, were directed towards the breach of the angle. The second party assigned to Major Irving, with two companies of the Hundred-and-First and as many sepoyes, were to remain at the gate and the rest of the force was held in reserve under Major Carnac.

The parties moved towards their targets an hour before day-break and Champion's was able to reach the breach undetected. It was only when he began the ascent that the alarm was given. "The enemy opened a heavy fire of artillery from the flanking tower to southward of the breach, with trifling effect; but at the summit of the breach itself the garrison met the assailants gallantly and fought them desperately hand to hand. Meanwhile, Irving, finding it impossible to cross the ditch to the other breach, brought his column to join that of Champion, when the two together quickly forced an entrance. Champion, then turned to clear the ramparts to westward and again joined Irving, who, having captured the southern tower, had hurried to the eastern gate to admit the main body. But now it was found that the inside of the gate was guarded by a wall of masonry containing a courtyard of about forty yards square, which was accessible only by a wicket too narrow to admit two men abreast. This courtyard was strongly held, and Irving and Champion were almost immediately struck down by the fire from it, Irving receiving a mortal wound. Lieutenants Nicoll and Crow at once took their

1. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 82.

places, charged the wicket, and by sheer hard fighting cleared the courtyard. The gate was then opened and the main body rushed in, but the officer at its head was instantly disabled by a bullet, and the command reverted to Nicoll. He paused only to collect ammunition from the pouches of the fallen, and renewing the attack on the garrison, who had rallied in the south-east bastion, drove them from it at the point of the bayonet, and completed the capture of the city."¹

Of the total casualties suffered by the invading army, one officer and twenty-five English were killed and eight officers and thirty-five English were wounded. The defenders lost 300 of their dead within the citadel alone.² After putting Patna in a proper state of defence Adams started again and by the 19th of November reached Daoudnagar, half way to Rohtas. But then Mir Kasim with 30,000 men including Sumroo's Brigade, and with his treasure crossed over to Oudh and sought the protection of the Nawab of Oudh.

Adams handed over the command to Knox on December 9, 1763, and died on the 7th of January at Calcutta at the age of thirty-four. Making an estimate of Adam's achievements Fortescue says: "Adams wrought marvels such as can be matched by few generals. Starting at the height of the hot season with a handful of British veterans and little more than a handful of Sepoys, chiefly raw recruits, with deficient transport and with an empty treasury, he marched against the most powerful force in India, trained and partly commanded by European officers, well appointed, well equipped and full of courage and spirit. He came up with it within one hundred miles of his base, and left the enemy no peace still he had forced him back step by step four hundred miles, and finally driven him from the country. In the course of these operations he sup-

1. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 83-84.

2. Adam's journal says that 2000 of the enemy were killed on the spot, and that about 500 who had hidden themselves in an old house were burned to death owing to their ammunition taking fire, the poor wretches being packed so close that they could not run away.

ported himself always from his enemy's supplies, beat him in three pitched battles on the plain, forced him from one entrenched position of stupendous strength, and captured two fortified cities."

Shuja-ud-Daula, the Nawab of Oudh, promised protection and support to Mir Kasim. He was greatly influenced by the powerful, perfectly equipped, trained, and disciplined force of Mir Kasim. Shah Alam also joined them. The allied forces marched to Banaras in March, 1764, and prepared to cross the river. Meanwhile Knox died and Carnac took over command of the English army. During the intervening period of three months, the English force was greatly augmented and had now about seven thousand regular troops, irrespective of the twelve thousand native levies of Mir Jafar. The forces of the allies meanwhile were passing the Ganges over a bridge of boats at Banaras, when only half of them had crossed, the bridge was swept away. This gave the British an opportunity to march swiftly and overwhelm the isolated division. Carnac then moved north-westward and arrived at Buxar on the 17th of March where he intended to stand on the defensive.

Even on the insistence of the Council at Calcutta to take offensive, Carnac could not advance; instead, on the 4th of April, after taking the advice of a Council of war, began his retreat to Dinapore, where he was reinforced by the Hundred-and-Third. On the 18th he advanced to oppose the allies passage on the Sone. But he was too late and the allies had already crossed the Sone before he started to prevent them. The attempt of Carnac to draw the allied force into an ambuscade also failed. But Shuja-ud-Daula was able to detach his two divisions to make a wide circuit round the British army and cut it off from Patna. But after an skirmish with a British convoy, one of his division retreated. This enabled Carnac to retreat, and on the 25th the army weary, harrassed and discontented, arrived at Patna.

"Here a strong defensive position had been entrenched outside the walls of the city, whereof the eastern side and the greater part of the southern side were allotted to Meer

Jaffier's troops. The Europeans were concentrated at the south-western angle, which was the weakest point, and the remainder of Carnac's troops was extended along the western front to the Ganges. The united armies numbered about nineteen thousand men. On the following day appeared the army of the Allies, estimated at five and thirty thousand men, and for a week both parties remained inactive, until on the 2nd of May a report, that British reinforcements were approaching, determined Shuja-ud-Daulah to make an attack. His plan, not ill conceived, was to concentrate his main assault and the best of his troops against the Europeans, and if possible to overwhelm them, while his irregulars should hold the levies of Meer Jaffier in check. Accordingly he entrusted the eastern and southern fronts of the British lines to Shah Alum, and himself took post with a chosen body of troops, supported by three thousand Rohilla horse, on the southern front, nearly opposite to the south-western angle. More of his own troops and a body of five thousand naked fanatics prolonged the line to his left. At the angle where the British line was bent to follow the western front of the city, Sumroo was stationed with his regular brigades, while other of Meer Cossim's troops were extended along the western front to the Ganges, Meer Cossim himself standing in rear with a reserve.¹ But there was no cohesion among the allies. The Emperor had no interest in the war. Mir Kasim had been deprived of initiative and reduced to the position of a subordinate commander, the supreme command being held by Shuja-ud-Daula; Beni Bahadur had become very intimate with Shitab Rai; and Balwant Singh, Raja of Banaras, was a half-hearted ally. The allies forces comprised of 40,000 of whom only 12,000 were regular troops. The English forces amounted to 19,000—12,000 men of Mir Jafar's army, about 1,000 Europeans and 6,000 Indians of the English army.

The battle was fought on the 3rd May, 1764, and the first few engagements went in favour of the allies. But by the afternoon their advantage was lost. Although Shuja-

1. Fortescue, Vol. III, p. 92.

ud-Daula and his army displayed remarkable bravery, he had ultimately to withdraw. Giving an account of the action Carnac wrote on 4th May :

"The United forces of the enemy who were exceedingly numerous and had with them a considerable number of cannon presented themselves before us early yesterday in order of Battle and after cannonading some time at a distance, began a little before noon a very vigorous and warm attack. Sombre with the choice of the Infantry supported by a large body of cavalry made an attack upon our front but not being able to advance upon so heavy a force as we gave them, they lay under cover waiting for the success of the assault upon our rear. where the enemy exerted their principle efforts, it was sunset before we had completely repulsed them. Our people were so extremely fatigued with the labours of the day and having been up most part of the preceding night in expectation of the attack, that they were not able to pursue, and the enemy took the opportunity of the Dusk to carry off their cannon. I had enough to do to look to every quarter as I was obliged to divide my attention between the city, the Nabob's camp and our own post. All the principal officers distinguished themselves in their respective stations and I cannot say too much of the good behaviour of the army in general and in particular of the sepoys who sustained the front of the attack. The enemy must have met with an immense loss as his own fire was very close and extremely well distributed. I have not yet been able to get an exact account of ours. In Europeans it is inconsiderable, Captain Nollekins and Lieutenant Gardener are the only officers wounded, but both dangerously. The former has received such a wound as it is thought will occasion the loss of a leg, and the latter has had both his legs broke."¹

Shuja-ud-Daula remained near Patna for about a month and then withdrew to Buxar. The rains had set in and both sides utilized the intervening period for making preparations for a fresh engagement. Side by side negotiations

1. *Secret Proceedings, Foreign Department, dated 14-5-1764.*

were going on for peace. Shuja-ud-Daula was prepared to recognise Mir Jafar as his 'manager' of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and also to confirm the districts being held by the English to them if they become obedient to him. Apparently, the conditions were not likely to be accepted. The English position was made clear in the Council's letter to Carnac :

"Agreed we write to him that this silence has laid us under the necessity of taking our information of affairs of the army from reports and private letters. By these we are given to understand that ever since the repulse of the enemy on the 3rd instant their army has lain within two or three coss of our camp. That latterly frequent messages have passed between their camp and ours and particularly that Mende Ali Cawn has come over to us with some of his dependents. That as we are convinced of the treacherous disposition of the people we have to deal with, and have no accounts from him of the plan on which he proceeds, we cannot help apprehending bad consequences from this delay. And that the enemy may be endeavouring to amuse and gain time to answer some purpose of their own perhaps forming parties in the city of Patna or in our camp, that he will easily perceive by the tenor of all our letters that we had resolved from the beginning not to treat with Sujah Dowla if ever he took the part of Meer Cossim, and that we departed not from this resolution even when our army was under some difficulties; far less shall we think of such a measure now when he is at the head of an army which we flatter ourselves will be sure of success whenever they engage. That we had a convincing proof of the good disposition of the troops from their behaviour in the last action. And as his apprehensions on this head seemed to be the only point of difficulty. We hope he has by this time made use of this good disposition in attacking and driving the enemy out of the country. That we can entertain no thoughts of treating with Shujah Dowla having no conception of any concessions which it is in his power to make us. That the only ones we could ever listen to must be the deliver-

ing up of Meer Cossim, Sombre and our Deserters, and these from the part they compose of Shujah Dowlah's strength we judge it is by no means in his power to perform. Nor would we have our operations suspended for the space of one hour until these persons are put into our hands. That we have much reason to imagine the Nabob may give in to any overtures for a negotiation in the vain hope of holding the Subardarree by the King's authority independent of our support, but that he must by no means be allowed to carry on any correspondence without His (the Major's) knowledge neither in the present circumstances to receive any sunnuds from the King or Shujah Dowlah that in this and all other measures the Nabob must be entirely ruled by him whilst the war continues."¹

In spite of this stiff attitude adopted by the council, negotiations dragged on for several months. During this period the council was repeatedly directing Carnac to take the offensive. Carnac did not comply and maintained that his army was not in a position to go to war without reinforcement, provisions and rest. Carnac accordingly put the troops in cantonments. Explaining the position with some bitterness Carnac wrote on 23rd July:

"I have repeatedly represented to you that most of our troops were so exhausted with what they had already gone through as not to be in a good condition to undergo the fatigue of another wet campaign, and it is to be feared they will be so harassed thereby as not to be capable of service when the season would admit of it; besides I learn there is much to be apprehended that the men in their present disposition will not be brought patiently to submit to the hardships they are likely to endure. Indeed the order you have thought proper to give seems to me, to be big with mischief. However it is so absolute as to leave no room for deviating thencefrom. I have therefore directed the army to hold themselves in readiness to march, and it shall be set in motion as soon as possible and the Evils that may ensue must rest upon yourselves. We have such

1. *Secret Proceedings, Foreign Deptt.*, dated 21-5-1764, pp. 205-7

a number of sick as to have no more men here fit for duty than 300 in Battalion—so that Major Champion who has with him the choice of the army as well as Europeans as Sepoys must be recalled leaving a sufficient detachment for the security of the Sircar Serang. There is no doubt the march will be attended with great difficulties the rains having commenced, and the waters being out and consequently the ways must be exceedingly bad, nor can we for some time derive any advantage from the Ganges as the principal part of our road lies thereof two or three coss and the intermediate space being mostly Jangul and Miry we shall hardly be able to keep a communication with the River.

Amongst many material reasons for cantoning the troops was that of some how or other completing the donation in order to put an end if possible to that main source of discontent. We might have contrived to separate those to whom a moiety is still due so as to satisfy them without the risk of offending others whereas if they be paid off in the midst of so many, who have nothing to receive, a murmering will inevitably follow and that the remainder of the donation will be promptly demanded, the moment we move we have all imaginable reason to expect.

While you leave nothing to the discretion of your commander in chief, there can be no use in my remaining with the army nor can I be answerable for the charge thereof whilst you at so great a distance give absolute orders for its operations without the obstacles that may intervene to render the execution, if not impracticable, extremely hazardous.

I could wish gentlemen you would look back to the situation of the army when I took the command. You were on the brink of a precipice, from which I flatter myself, I have been greatly instrumental in delivering you as Captain Forster, who is constantly amongst the men and then whom no one is so well acquainted of their intentions, declares that had I not arrived critically as I did they were determined to march back to Patna and from thence to Calcutta, I have hitherto with the utmost difficulty kept them within bounds but from some late inci-

dents it appears that they are ready again to break forth and it will require the nicest management... and caution to restrain them.

Had you gentlemen been better acquainted with your danger you would be more sensible of the happiness of your deliverance and think yourselves very fortunate that all circumstances considered you have so well got rid of the formidable force that invaded this Province. By much the worst. So it is universally said that of any force that ever entered the country such a force as you cannot with prudence think of acting offensively against till we have first subdued the ill disposition of our own troops and new modelled the army which cannot be done in the field and cannot otherwise be effected but by their being in cantonments."¹

The Council did not believe Carnac and called for the opinion of the commanding officers whether the army was capable of acting offensively. Accordingly it decided on 2nd July .

"That we do write in the mean time to him or the commanding officer of the army acquainting him that we wait the opinion of the officers in consequence of our letter of the 14th ultimo upon the question whether we are capable of acting offensively or not. If it is judged that we are not, we leave it to him to keep the troops in camp or in cantonments wherever he thinks best for the health of the men there to remain until we can send up such reinforcements, as will put the army in condition to take the field and march against the enemy, in the meantime as a body of cavalry is found to be so essentially necessary in carrying on the war we desire he will continue to receive into the service as many good horsemen as he shall be able to procure ; that immediately upon the receipt of this letter we desire he will represent to the Nabob the necessity of his paying off the remainder of the donation money due to the non-commissioned officers and private men and that he will see it distributed to the men with such pre-

1. *Secret Proceedings, Foreign Deptt., July 2nd, 1764.*

cautions as he thinks best calculated to prevent its becoming a subject of uneasiness to those who are not entitled to any share. That if the Nabob should make any delay in advancing the money for this purpose, and the pay master can raise the amount by drafts upon us, we desire he will do so, that the men may be immediately paid off, as we think it highly necessary these demands should be brought to an end, before any fresh troops join the Army.¹

All the commanding officers agreed with Carnac and gave their separate opinions which are given below otherwise. Major Champion wrote on 26th and 28th June to Carnac and the council respectively.

"This day at noon I was favoured with your letter of the 24th enclosing duplicate of the Governor and Council's letter dated 11th.

It is with the utmost concern I find that the gentlemen at Calcutta have issued their orders so peremptorily to you. I am at a loss what to say on the occasion, I foresee a storm that will not easily be conquered and such a risk that will attend the operations as may be fatal to those concerned.

I am ready to share in any dangers and fatigues, though my constitution is much shaken from the severe campaign already, but I confess I could wish that some means were thought of to set aside their too precipitate thoughts; and I have hopes they will think better of it before you have anything ready for executing their orders.

I am sorry to inform you that we have at this time 45 sick, and the major part of our officers are in the same condition. Three Captains have already declared themselves unfit for service, and must go into the hospital. Although I had with me the best of the men, I am under the necessity of nursing them being to all appearance worn out.

The marines have thrice demanded their donation money and have been satisfied by fair promises made to them that their shares were to be paid by the navy, but when encouraged by others I fear the worst.

I beg to receive your commands in what manner I am

1. *Ibid.*

to act, I shall march towards Cundia ; although in quitting this country I leave many forts in the possession of disaffected zamindars who are on the point of coming in."

"I have weighed well your orders and as far as my abilities will admit of, the general state of your army, and it is my opinion they are not in a condition on any terms to take the field during the rains for in such case, you will not have a fourth man fit for service in the fair season, and nothing but the most urgent case ought to oblige us to such a step. The minds of our men are not settled and a conjunction at this time with a prospect of a severe campaign, it is impossible to judge in what it might [torn].

I therefore must differ from your sentiments ; and think cantoning the troops the most prudent method we can take to settle the minds, and re-establish the bodies of our men which are fairly worn out with fatigue.

As to the addition of troops we most certainly do want them, as well as to reinforce us, as to enable us to draft those foreigners who have been the source of corrupting your good men, and causing so many unhappy hours to your officers."

Major Pembles opinion. He wrote to Carnac :

"In consequence of your having laid before the particular officers nominated for that purpose by the Hon'ble the President and Council of Fort William, two letters from them bearing date the 11th and 14th instant the former containing an express order to put the army immediately in motion and to march opposite to Banaras, the latter implying a question stated to the said officers whether the present strength of the army is sufficient to put their orders in execution, so as to act offensively against the enemy, and if not what further reinforcements are required. I have with great attention considered the same, and as I declare to have nothing so much at heart as the true interest and honour of the service, I have endeavoured to point out every circumstances that can tend to that purpose, I am to acquaint you then Sir, that it is my opinion that the army is not at present in a condition of acting offensively neither is it in a capacity of marching or keeping the field any longer at this season of the year

and for the following reasons:—

First and principally the disaffection and spirit of mutiny that very apparently exists still in the Battalion and of which almost daily proofs offer. I cannot avoid remarking in particular the 3rd May when in the face of the enemy, it was with great difficulty the Grenadier Company could be kept within any bounds, either by myself or the officers commanding it though at the same time it was evident to them, that they were posted where it was natural to expect the principal attack would be made and I at length with your approbation thought it necessary to remove them from the Hill—

I am sorry to say likewise that the Sepoys are not yet exempt from the same charge. Secondly that the sick and invalids of the army amount at this time to near 350 men the number increasing daily, and those doing duty having all the appearances of men worn out by the fatigues of a long campaign and,—Lastly, that as the rains are now set in the waters greatly out, and understanding that the road is at a considerable distance from the river side—the communication with the army may be greatly impeded and perhaps cut off at a time when circumstances may require it most to be open. Upon these considerations I do judge it to be extremely hazardous for the army to keep the field, but on the contrary that it is of the highest consequences, the troops should be cantoned immediately by which means we shall be enabled to recover the soldiery from the indisposition of their minds and bodies, and by a strict attention to exact discipline, to form and new model the army—so that in future we shall run no risk of its relaxing into its present disorderly and unmilitary state, and be able to take the field early in the season with that spirit, vigour and unanimity that ought ever to animate a good soldier: was it not for the reasons above-mentioned I make no doubt of the army acting offensively, though I think at the same time that any reinforcements that can be conveniently spared should be added to it, every one must be sensible that the great extent of country we at present possess will require a very considerable force to maintain—

As I remarked in the latter part of the Board's letter to you of the 14th June, their permission for you to go to Calcutta, I cannot conclude this letter without expressing my concern at your leaving the army, as it would not be doing justice to the service or yourself not to declare, that the former will thereby lose a very able and experienced officer, and who I can with great truth say has been indefatigably attached to its interest since I had the honour of serving with the army."

Stibbert wrote to Carnac:

"Having duly considered the letters to you of the 11th and 14th instant of the Hon'ble President and Council, relative to the march of the army against the Nabob Shuja Dowlah, also its present state for carrying into immediate execution the plan therein mentioned, the following submission to the same are my sentiments thereon.

In the first place the great fatigues and hardships the troops have suffered in general, in the prosecution of the war this last campaign especially in being out the whole rainy season from which the disorders thereby contracted and otherwise the great numbers that have died since the army's first taking the field in July last, is almost incredible, of so small a body of men, and our present weakly condition, according to the Hospital Returns of no less than 6 Captains, 7 Subalterns, and 252 non-commissioned and private men, besides numbers more ailing, that would on our marching be obliged to be sent there, not to mention 48 non-commissioned and private that were lately invalided has rendered them very unable for keeping the field these rains by which the army is greatly to be feared would be so reduced as to be but in a bad state for action after when its greatest strength may be most required for any operations at that time necessary to oppose then to be expected the greatest efforts made it highly needful for some refreshment to be given to the people, sepoyas as well as Europeans.

Secondly as the late spirit of Mutiny, likely to have been of the most fatal consequences to us, is not so thoroughly extinguished, but to be most feared may break

out fresh on entering on a campaign at this season of the year, especially as the whole donation is not yet settled with the Europeans and to pay them off in the field marching towards an enemy, when the whole troops must be together would by no means be eligible—as they sepoys who have little or nothing more to receive, might on such an occasion make such further demands which could not be so easily complied with; besides those Europeans who have joined the army are not entitled might be induced to raise disturbances, in not receiving some share with the rest of the men likewise those sepoys newly raised not entitled, when everything of this nature may be easily obviated, by properly dividing and cantoning the army, till the rains are over, and paying off what is due to those entitled to receive, and by some severity of discipline, not to be brought on in the height of service; with troops of such temper as our army is now composed of; entirely root out the seeds of all such commotions for the future, and its to be hoped leave us no room to apprehend any danger from ourselves.

Thirdly, as all those Battalions of sepoys, raised since the army took the field have never for want of time been properly disciplined therefore not altogether to be depended on in such a manner as is requisite it in some measure becomes necessary to canton them for a while for that purpose. By the time that the rains are over with care and attention of the Officers commanding them, they may be so far brought too, as in a great degree to be equally relied on with the old Battalions. But this I only mention as a circumstance that greatly weakens our force, which might perhaps be overlooked, another must happen which may likewise not to be noticed—a great number of Europeans whose contracts have been out for some time past, and have been promised their discharge, and have been put off from time to time, are ever to become so unfortunate and even insolent on the occasion, that it would be hardly possible neither would it be altogether prudent to take them upon service against their inclinations.

From these circumstances considered, the present state of the army in my judgment is no ways conditioned, as

could be wished for, and indeed is necessary for opening a campaign at this season of the year, and carrying on an offensive war against the enemy, otherwise than already convinced by our detachment in the Sircar Serang country. Where they can collect their whole force, any weak attempts would be only an encouragement to them—rather than any advantage to ourselves—as to the advantages we might reap in the rains from the Ganges in transporting our stores and provisions up by water they would be but little, especially in our provisions, as a road from the Soan that an army can march lays wide some coss from that river all the way to Buxar the country low and intersected with Nullas, and some part of it very Jungly by the river side, so that it would be with great difficulty we could get at our boats when the waters are out, before our arrival at that place and after as there is no high road from thence across the river Carramnassa and by the side of the Ganges, to that part of the country opposite to Banares, in all probability we should meet from Buxar also with them the same difficulties; and if we were to march the great road by the way of Dondnaghur, on the Sassaram and from thence crossing the Carramnassa that way, we should meet with no assistance at all form our boats till our arrival at the Ganges, as before opposite to Banares. Indeed the most ready way for an expedition of this kind in the rains would be to carry it on the other side of the Ganges through the Sircar Serang country; as we might expect to meet with more assistance from our boats on that side than this; but not (that the Road laying wide of the river on both) as might be imagined from either.

When the rains are over and the waters in some degree gone off, from the refreshment our troops will get by that time and the order and discipline, they will be brought to, there's no doubt with some small reinforcement of Europeans, and two or three thousand or more, but that number at least of the best Mogul cavalry which from experience is too obvious are absolutely necessary while we have such powerful bodies of horse to act against, but our present force will be then sufficient, for carrying into execution with success the plan proposed by the Hon'ble Board,

and that we shall soon be able—to convince Shuja Dowlah of our power to act as well offensively as defensively, and further add to the honour of our arms."

Capt. Weymas's opinion :

"I do declare as my opinion that the army can in no means act according to that order of the Hon'ble Council without rendering it unfit for services that may be expected from it in a season proper for the field, what induces me to think so is, that the rainy season which is approaching fast will make the roads almost unpassable if I may judge from the appearance of the country on this side of the Ganges, which is now made difficult to march over by the rains that have already fell, and from reports of officers who have well experienced the country, between Patna and the Caramnassa I may conclude that the vigour of the army, now too much relaxed by severe services, may be totally exhausted if it attempts to take the field in health and spirits in a season fit only for an army to act which is composed of officers and soldiers almost worn out with fatigue, and destitute of the clothing necessary to preserve their health, which cannot be procured for them when in the field.

By the time the army arrives at the Soane that river will not be fordable and I imagine too rapid to throw a bridge over it, till the rains swell it to a moderate current in which time the enemy will not be deficient in collecting their force, and endeavouring to prevent our getting footing on the opposite side, they may be amused by our building a bridge, when we are at the same time embarking in boats, and by landing above the enemy draw them off from the defence of the Soane. How far that is practicable I cannot judge, till I am informed what boats can be got in readiness, proper to land an army in the face of an enemy."

Jennings gave his opinion and wrote to Carnac :

"After weighing the different circumstances, in respect to the army's acting offensively and their movement to-

wards Banares—

I beg leave to observe 1st of the Artillery:— our carriages in general are greatly out of order owing to the continuance of the long campaign (though no opportunity has been omitted in repairs that the field duty would allow of) many of the checks of the gun carriages are so far gone that a very little firing or hard travelling must break them down.

Most of our field pieces likewise went bushing, these are damages which cannot well be remedied in camp and require sometime completing.

2ndly. The troops by the length of the campaign, and great fatigues are almost exhausted and require some time for recruiting. I am informed we have at present near 350 sick in the hospitals besides the daily increase which must be expected during the wet season and the army's continuance in the field; I must likewise take notice, that many of the men's time and servitude being expired have most of them applied for their discharges (or passports for going to Calcutta) and this application has chiefly taken place since your orders of the 23rd June for the army to hold themselves in readiness to march at a moment's warning. Add to this the discontent of the remainder in respect to the payment of their donation money makes it dubious whether their march at this season would not be attended with another insurrection, to prevent which I think it absolutely necessary the troops be divided for some time and their donation money paid them as soon as possible which cannot be done any otherwise than by cantonments.

3rdly: The march of the army through the Budgepore country in the wet season will be attended with many and great difficulties the rains are already set in and by all accounts the Soane is impassable but by boats and that with great hazard on account of the violence of the stream the same difficulties will attend crossing the Durguttee and Caramnassa.

The roads in general between the Soane and Caramnassa even in the dry season are very bad owing to the rottenness of the ground which breaks and flaws all through

the country in large pits and holes which being mostly covered during the rains will make it almost impassable for the artillery, if not for the infantry.

4thly. In the letter from the Board dated the 11th June the Governor and Council are of opinion that the rains will not be any impediment, but on the contrary a convenience in respect to supplying the army with provisions, this observation is very just as far as the river is concerned. But in many parts of the Budgepore country the army will be necessitated to leave the river sometimes 6 or 7 coss, and at those places where few or no cross roads are to be found, and the distance mostly hollow ways and jungles, impossible for loaded bullocks to pass without taking large traverses of a day or twos' march to gain a few coss. It is needless to observe that the army must expect no supplies from the country. What little produce the inhabitants have been able to gather this last season must have been entirely consumed by Shujah Dowlah's army.

5thly. For the reasons before given I do not think it practicable with the army we have at present and I apprehend before the reinforcements can join that the enemy will have crossed the Ganges: and the army's continuance in the field during the rains will render them unable to act at a time when the enemy's army may be expected to take the field."

Captain Spelman's opinion. He wrote to Carnac: "Having perused the letters from the Board of the 11th and 14th instant the first respecting the army's marching and pursuing the enemy as far as the Ganges opposite Banares, and bringing them to an action if possible the latter repeating that order and requiring the opinion of the field officers and others separately whether they judged the plan fixed on by the Board practicable or not with the force at present under your command and what addition of troops would be requisite for that purpose.

In obedience to their orders I have now the honour to lay before you my opinion of that matter.

1st. I do not think it at this time practicable, that you

can with propriety carry their honour's intentions into execution and my reasons are, that the season of the year is now too far advanced, the rains that have already fallen and what we may daily expect to increase will endanger if not entirely demolish the very few officers and men you have now remaining and whose numbers are too insufficient to undertake anything of consequence. The inclemency of the weather during the late campaign, and the constant employment of the army on different occasions having rendered the major part of what is left in an emaciated and sickly situation, amongst whom are many who were they to be put on service at this juncture would daily decline so that they would not be in a condition to prosecute anything material but would be daily returning to the hospital, by which means your numbers would be so inconsiderable, that an attempt of this kind might be attended with fatal consequences.

The next and last observation I have to make is, that we are unlucky enough to have at least upwards of 300 Europeans sick in the hospital—and invalids exclusive of officers, and many falling sick daily. The seeds of mutiny and discontent far from being rooted out, and I cannot help thinking that the best way to make it effectually subside would be to remain in cantonments till a more favourable season offered, in which time by the attention and diligence of the officers, the principal persons suspected might be found out and removed, and the others reclaimed and reduced to obedience besides those in the hospital might be sufficiently recovered to join you. As to what reinforcements you may receive in all probability they will be some time before they can arrive.

I might advance many other reasons, but I think what I have already said on the occasion sufficient.

To conclude I do assure you I am as much concerned for the welfare and prosperity of the service as any man in it, and the sentiments I have now given you, on this head are free and unreserved and the honest dictates of my mind."

Captain Moran's opinion given to the Council.

"I heartily wish it was in my power to give my opinion in favour of the order you were pleased to send Major Carnac but to the contrary I firmly believe that what Europeans we have in the province of Behar would not be able to go through six weeks campaign in the rains. This detachment that I have the honour to be with, has now in the hospital 45 men out of 265 and that within this 20 days of the stoutest and best that could be picked out on the parade at Patna.

I have further to observe that Captain Wemyss compy. who were all stout able men has 20 in the same hospital when this is considered what must we expect from the ensuing rains. It is certain our European troops are quite exhausted both officers and men, and really very unfit to undertake the fatigue of another campaign in the rains.

I can assure you that the men have not 20 pair of shoes or stockings amongst them all, nor can we provide them with any although the utmost pains has been taken by every captain.

I beg leave further to observe to you that I don't think our train of artillery fit to stand another campaign for they appear to be quite shook to pieces.

These with many other difficulties we have to fight against, as well the enemy and in all probability may overcome us if the enemy don't.

Captain Maclean's opinion. He wrote to Carnac:

"I have perused the President and Council's letter to you dated 11th June containing their positive instructions to put the army immediately in motion and pursue the enemy as far as the banks of the Ganges opposite to Banares. I have also persued their second letter to you dated the 14th June desiring the opinions of the field officers therein mentioned. Whether the plan in their former letter to you for the operation of the army was practicable with the force at present under your command the following are my sentiments on that head.

The army at present are very sickly. Upwards of 300 Europeans being in the hospitals of Patna and Mongheer,

and many more ready to go into the hospital should the army be ordered to march, to begin another wet campaign, the last being yet very fresh in remembrance, the spirit of sedition which began amongst the troops in February last—is far from yet being subdued and they are therefore not to be entirely depended upon: instances of this you have seen yourself since you took the command of the army.

The new formed Battalions of Sepoys are yet undisciplined in consequence of which no great dependance can be placed on them, should they be ordered on immediate service.

Upon the whole I am of opinion that the army now under your command in its present circumstances and condition is not sufficient to act offensively against the enemy with that prospect of success, and in that effectual manner the President and Council mean in their plan."¹

The above clearly shows that all the officers were in agreement with Carnac, their commander, that the British force was not in a position to take the field in an offensive way. Had this condition been known to the other party, they might have taken full advantage of it. One reason why they did not make a move may be that they themselves might be as weak for offensive action as their adversaries were.

At this stage there was a change in the command. The command of the English army was taken over by Major Hector Munro from Carnac on 12 August. He was able to seduce some of the Mughal officers and corrupt some of the generals of Shuja-ud-Daula. On 9 October Munro advanced from Patna to give battle to Shuja-ud-Daula. On 23rd the battle of Buxar was fought. It lasted for three hours in which the forces of the Nawab of Oudh fought gallantly and pushed back the English forces several times. Ultimately English emerged victorious although Lt. Harper thought: 'I fancy had one or two thousand of the enemy behaved as well as those few that attacked the grenadiers we should have lost the day....

The chance was more than once against us, and I am of opinion the sepoys would not have been able to stand the cannonade five minutes longer than they did.'

But despite the excellent fight put up by the Nawab's army, it lost because, as usual, the Indian side maintained their resistance or advance by pushing forward their men to be indiscriminately slaughtered by the English fire. The English won because of their superior arms, better training, discipline and above all good luck. Giving an account of the battle Munro wrote :

"The troops encamped in sight of the enemy's encampment the 22nd when some of the principal officers and myself went to reconnoitre their situation and after resolving on the place of attack which I intended should be very early the 23rd, Hircarrahs were dispatched to bring information of the roads and some few remarks they were ordered to make but as they did not return at 12 at night the attack was put off till the 24th.

The morning of the 23rd I went out in the same manner as before at daylight to reconnoitre at which time their whole army was under arms and some of them in motion, as we imagined expecting an attack early that morning but we had no sooner returned to Camp than they were perceived by Major Champion to be moving forward. Upon which I ordered in the advanced posts and the drums to beat to arms. The army formed immediately in line of battle in front of our camp which I ordered not to be struck as it might prove of service to our second line, which was the case when the enemy charged our Rear. Their Cannonading began at 9 o'clock and half an hour after the action became general. We had a morass in our Front which prevented our moving up for some time, by which means the number of cannon they had, which were well levelled and equally well disposed galled us very much, I was forced to order a Battalion of Sepoys with one gun from the right of the first line to move forward to silence one of their batteries which played upon our flank and obliged to support it by another battalion from the second line which had the desired effect, then

I ordered both the lines to face to the Right, and to march very slow in order to clear our left wing of the Morass. Major Stibbert sending me word it could not clear it; and when done to face to our former front, the Right wing wheeled from the left and then the whole first line moved forward keeping a very brisk cannonading. I sent orders to Major Pemble who commanded the second line to face it to the Right about and follow the first, but the Gentleman saw the propriety of that movement so soon, that he began o put in execution before he received my orders. Immediately after both the lines pushed forward with so much ardour and resolution at which time the small arms began, that the enemy soon after began to give way and five minutes before twelve their whole army were put to flight, we pursued them to a Nulla about a coss from the field of battle but the bridge being broken either by design or accident the pursuit ended at 1/2 past 3 in the afternoon otherwise I would have followed them to the Caramnassa. By a moderate computation they must have lost between the killed in the Field, and those drowned in the Nulla about 6,000 men. Give me leave now Gentlemen to inform you that I cannot enough applaud nor is it in my power to express it at the same time. I do but justice, to the merit of the officers from their brave and gallant behaviour of the 23rd and also those of the troops in general. I would look upon it a happiness as well as an honour had I it in my power to reward their merit. But you have and I must earnestly request you may in due time take the proper notice of it and acquaint the Hon'ble Company of their good behaviour and the conduct and behaviour of the Field Officers and the Commandant of Artillery in particular [torn] with that of the whole I beg leave to recommend to you for promotion Messrs Cricholls, Bevan and Harper, three very brave young men. Thus having ended the Battle of Buxar give me leave to conclude my letter with assuring you, that when some of the young officers, I mean those of a short standing in the service, have a little more experience with a little strict discipline and the men the latter, the Hon'ble Company will have a glorious small army for this part

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of the world. I shall proceed in a few days to Banares, where I shall wait for your further instructions. Enclosed is the list of the killed wounded and missing. There is one hundred and thirty pieces of Cannon taken from the enemy, a particular account of them shall be sent tomorrow. Captain Wedderburn took some stands of arms and saved some of our grain [torn]. All the Officers as myself lost all our camp equipage and Baggage."¹

Thus ended the battle of Buxar which completed the work that had been begun at Plassey. Both the battles were of a short duration and in both superior discipline and arms together with superior luck had played its part. The battle of Buxar was, in a sense more decisive than the battle of Plassey. It resulted in the discomfiture of Shah Alam, the Mughal Emperor, his Wazir, Shuja-ud-Daula, and the fugitive Nawab of Bengal, Mir Qasim. The East India Company emerged as the most dominating power from this battle. The future of the Company was assured, and there hardly remained a chance for the beaten powers to raise their head once again. The English were well on their way for the establishment of an Empire in the East.

1. *Ibid.*, dt. 6-11-1764.

CONCLUSION

A close study of the wars fought during the period under study reveals that different factors accounted for the British victories and defeats. During the first British expedition against the Mughals, the English lost mainly because they highly under-estimated the capabilities of the Mughals and were led into the adventure on the advice of their agents, who were primarily traders and not military commanders. They, therefore, had to face the consequences. In 1756, the same mistake was again repeated. They under-estimated Siraj-ud-Daula and his army and the result again was their humiliation and defeat.

Wiser with these two lessons, the English never again underestimated their opponents. Clive who had come to avenge the English defeat, moved very cautiously and risked the war at Plassey only after he had defeated the French and had won over Mir Jafar and other officers of Siraj-ud-Daula to his side. Even after this he attacked Siraj only after his army had begun to withdraw. This caution was maintained throughout and we find that Carnac and military commanders under him, despite Council's repeated orders to attack Shuja-ud-Daula, spent many months in making preparations for attack.

Next important point which comes to light is the war strategy followed by the British. Their commanders always used their fire power to the maximum advantage and in every battle it was their fire-arms which brought them victory. The Indians, on the other hand, always attempted to overwhelm the English by sheer numbers and in this attempt provided themselves targets to their guns. The result was heavy casualties of the Indians and their ultimate flight.

But the most successful strategy of the British in Bengal had been their power of seduction and intrigue. In almost every battle they were able to seduce Indian commanders through promises of money or positions. This was possible because of their very efficient intelligence. They always kept their spies in the opponents camp and court and were able to know their intentions and plans well in advance and also sowed dissensions in their opponents camp. A lad of hardly 20 years of age at the time of his death, Siraj was no match to the collective intrigues of the British and of his own experienced generals. The result was that the British were not opposed by an organised, unified, disciplined and determined army at the battle of Plassey. The position did not change substantially even afterwards.

The Indian army had many handicaps. It was never a united force and its commanders were inefficient and corrupt. Even during the actual war they were found with wine and women. Mir Kasim, who fought with the British was not a general and miserably lacked the physical courage to lead the army. Moreover, he heavily depended upon Europeans. When real crisis came these Europeans (The Brigades of Marker and Sumroo) did not put up their best efforts. In the initial stages only they showed some activity and annihilated the British forces stationed at Patna but subsequently when it came to fighting decisive wars, their inactivity and act of withdrawing even when they were winning give weight to the widely prevailed view that Europeans did not like to defeat Europeans for their Indian masters.

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BUXAR

**Secret Progs. 6th Nov. 1764. p. 252
FROM LINE**

Left Wing of European Bombay Department				Right Wing of Europeans H.M.'s Troops	
S.	6 lbs	3	6 pounders	6 lbs	Ro:
Left Wing Europeans			Right Wing Europeans		Ringh V
Bengal	Battn.		Bengal Battn.		Capt. G
lbs.		26 lbs.			6 lbs

2.6 pounders.

Grenadiers Europeans Troops

Corps de Reserve

The Order of Battle

Right Wing of Sepoys

Cap. Stables Major Stibbert

How 12 lbs

6 lb 12 lbs 6 lbs

Sepoys

Capt. Smith's

2 guns belong to
Capt. Smith's Batt'n.

4 Companies of Sepoys
with the Magazine.

Secret Progs. (Bengal) 6th Nov. 1764. P. 655

SEPOYS

	KILLED			WOUNDED			MISSING			Grand Total
	Jemadars	Dussittards	Private	Jemadars	Dussittards	Private	Total	Killed		
TOTAL	4	4	8	14	175	205	8	6	27	24 349 414 - - 3 1 54 58 677
MOGUL CAVALRY										
KILLED		WOUNDED			HORSES					
TOTAL	1	1	45	1	1	1	20	69	112	
GRAND TOTAL OF THE WHOLE										
Europeans										
Sepoys										
Black Cavalry										
625										

Sd/- Hector Monro

A Return of Ordnance &c taken in the Action W. Buxar 23rd October 1764.

1
Hannaford

Rowtize,	Colours Fernch	2
		2

Looter Nelson Sivvells mounted on Camels
Balvallos or surveyors mounted on Hackins

Kakaloos U. surveys mounted	120
Powder Maunds	750

Iron shot of sizes 732
N.B. Large quantities of Powder shot &c not collected,

7) mostly 8 & 6
22) ounces

when this return was made authoy. Roots.

Commissary or Artillery.
Sd/- W. Jennings.

Commandant of Artillery.

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